MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION AND THE ZAMINDARS OF BIHAR

ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

In the present work we have studied the relation of the hereditary chiefs of Bihar with the Mughal Imperial authority. The hereditary chiefs were all over Northern India and were known as *Zamindar*, *Kalantaran*, *buzurg* and *Marzabans* and in the region of Bihar were generally called as *Rajas*. They played quite an important role in consolidating the Mughal conquest in India. Modern historians such as Moreland, P. Saran, Nurul Hasan and Irfan Habib have discussed in details about their power and position in the Mughal empire. Several others important works on *zamindars* have also been published in learned journals. Ahsan Raza Khan in particular has made a detailed study of the *zamindars* of Akbar's reign but so far no detailed study of the *zamindars* of the *suba* of Bihar of the Mughal period had been attempted. Therefore in the present work a humble attempt is made to study the relation of the *zamindars* of Bihar with the Mughal Administration.

In the course of study we are able to identify a number of chieftaincies, prominent among them were Kharakpur Raj, the *Ujjainias* of Bhojpur, the *cheros* of Palamau, the Kokhra chieftaincy, the Gidhaur chieftaincy, the Darbhanga Raj, the Seor, the Panchet, etc. Some of these chieftaincies were very large having a group of *parganas* under their sway while others were so small that they held only a part of the *pargana*. But the information about their relation with the Mughal administration in our sources was so little that it would not have been possible to make a correct assessment of their position in the Mughal political structure. Therefore we have prepared detailed biographical account separately of each of the chieftaincies including

biographies of their chieftains, on the basis of information collected from all possible sources: the contemporary, near contemporary and later Persian sources, European travel accounts, local sources, family records, survey reports and district gazetteers.

In our thesis which is divided into ten chapters including introduction and conclusion , eight chapters (II to XI) are devoted to the biographies of above mentioned chieftaincies.

The first chapter is an Introduction of the present work.

In the second chapter, we have discussed about the Kharakpur chieftaincy which lay in the *sarkar* of Munger, Sangram Singh was the chief of Kharakpur who submitted to the Mughals in 1574.

The third chapter is related to the *Ujjainias* chieftaincy which was the biggest chieftaincy in Bihar. It was located in the *sarkar* of Shahabad and Rohtas. Raja Gajpati *Ujjainia* submitted to Munim Khan during 1568-69, and agreed to pay a sum of Rs. 5 lakh per annum as *malguzari.*

The fourth chapter deals with the *cheros* of Palamau. The *Ain-i Akbari* has mentioned that the *cheros* held the *zamindari* in the *parganas* of Chai-champa and Pudag (Pundrag) in the south of *sarkar* Bihar. The *chero* chieftaincy was not fully subjugated during the reign of Akbar and Jahangir but it was forced to submit during the period of Shahjahan (1633).

In the fifth chapter we have discussed the chieftaincy of Kokhra which lay in the extreme south of Bihar *suba.* Madhukar Rai, the chief of Kokhra

was compelled to submit the Mughal in 1586 imperial authority and agreed to pay *malguzari*.

The sixth chapter is devoted to the study of Gidhaur chieftaincy, which was one of the oldest family of *suba* Bihar. Gidhaur is mentioned in *Ain-i Akbari* as *Mahal* of *sarkar* Bihar. Puran Mal was the chief of Gidhaur who submitted to the Mughals during 1574-75.

The seventh chapter deals with the chieftaincy of Darbhanga. The nature of Darbhanga chieftaincy was different from other chieftaincies of Bihar. Mahesh Thakur the founder of Darbhanga Raj started his career as *Chaudhari* and *Qanungo* of Tirhut which he obtained through a *farman* of Akbar. The successors of Mahesh Thakur became more powerful with the assignment of additional territories during the reign of Jahangir and Shahjahan and by the time of Aurangzeb, they almost gained the position of an autonomous chief.

In the eighth chapter we have given details of the Champaran chieftaincy of Northern Bihar. The *mahals* of Samru, Mehsi and Majhora of *sarkar* Champaran were under the control of the chiefs. Udai Karan, the *zamindar* of Champaran submitted to the Mughals in 1575 and rendered useful services in recovering the fort of Hajipur from Afghans during 1575-76.

Chapter ninth is devoted to the study of Hathwa Raj which was also known as the chieftaincy of Kalyanpur, as Kalyanpur was its headquarters. The Kalyanpur chieftaincy was comprised of Sipah and Huespur, the two

mahals of *sarkar* Saran. Raja Kalyan Mal, the *zamindar* of Kalyanpur (Hathwa Raj) submitted to the Mughals during 1682-83.

We have also identified some of the other chieftaincies such as Panchet, Seor, Garhi, Ratanpur, Ramnagar, Bhagwanpur, Chai etc. But we were able to get very little information about these chieftaincies. However whatever little information we were able to gather we have given at the end of ninth chapter.

On the basis of information provided in the above chapters we have discussed in our concluding chapter the relationship of the *zaminars* of Bihar with the Mughal administration.

Our study had shown that most of the important chiefs of Bihar such as Raja Gajpati *Ujjainia*, Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur, Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur, Madhukar Rai and Bairisal, the chiefs of Kokhra, Raja Udai Karan of Champaran accepted the overlordship of the Mughal imperial authority during the years 1568-80, when the campaign against the Afghans was in progress. But it is quite surprising to note that even *Akbarnama* does not inform us that under what terms and conditions the chiefs accepted the subordination of the Mughals. For example about Raja Gajpati who submitted before Munim Khan in 1569, Abul Fazl writes that he agreed to pay five-lakh *malguzari* annually. In 1578 the chief of Seor presented a *Peshkash* of 30,000 rupees and 20 elephants. Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur and Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur after accepting the overlordship of the Mughals in 1591 offered to pay *Peshkash* of elephants and other rarities of the area. There is

hardly any references of any concession being offered to them on behalf of the imperial government.

However we do find that after accepting the overlordship of the Mughal authority some of these *Rajas* along with their military contingents helped imperial armies in suppressing the Afghan rebels. But none of them was either given a rank or an office in the Mughal administration. We also find a reference of marriage of Prince Danial with the daughter of Raja Dalpat *Ujjainia* during the reign of Akbar but even after the marriage the Raja was neither given a rank nor any office in the administration. We find another reference of marriage between the sister of Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur and Chandrabhan, the brother of Raja Man Singh. But after this marriage also the Raja of Gidhaur did not get any special favour from the Mughal administration. It may also be pointed out that later on neither Akbar nor after him any other Mughal ruler entered in to matrimonial alliance with the chiefs of Bihar.

It seems that the Bihar chiefs were not considered of sufficient status for the establishment of matrimonial relations or even for grant of *mansab*. It also seems that politically too they were not considered of much importance even in Bihar because many of them did not have large following of their clan or kinsmen as they had immigrated from different regions of Hindustan and established there *zamindaris* in Bihar after dispossessing either some local chief or an aboriginal tribe. The chiefs were also not given much importance by Akbar probably because most of them held very small area under their

control and strategically too the areas held by the chiefs were not of importance for the empire.

Besides that there close relation with the Afghans also came in their way because Mughal authorities could not fully rely on them. As a consequence as soon as the imperial armies withdrew from Bihar after suppressing Afghans the *Rajas* one after the other openly rebelled and refused to pay tribute. Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur, Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur, Raja Gajpati *Ujjainia* and Raja of Khokhra rebelled on several occasions during Akbar's reign.

The chieftains however improved their position at the Mughal court during the reign of Jahangir. For the first time some of them were granted *mansabs*. Raja Roz Afzun assigned the rank of 1500/700 during the reign of Jahangir. He remained at the court for sometimes and became a great favourite of the Emperor. He was sent to enquire as to why Khurram defied imperial orders and captured the *jagir* of Dholpur, which had already been assigned to Shahriyar. Again Raja Roz Afzun was sent to summon Prince Parvez to the court to lead a campaign against the rebel Prince Khurram. Raja Roz Afzun was promoted to the rank of 2000 *zat* and 1000 *sawar* during Shahjahan's reign. This was the highest *mansab* so far given to any chief of Bihar. He was asked not only to help the Mughal authority in and around Bihar but also was deputed to serve the imperial army in Kabul, Balkh and Deccan.

Raja Narayan Mal *Ujjainia* was also granted *mansab* of 1000 *zat* and 800 *sawar* during the reign of Jahangir. His son Raja Pratap *Ujjainia* held

mansab of 1500 *zat* and 1000 *sawar* in the first year of Shahjahan's reign. He also granted him *jagir* in sarkar Shahabad. Another *Ujjainia* chief Raja Rudra Singh was able to win the confidence of emperor Aurangzeb and was appointed the *faujdar* of *sarkar* Shahabad for sometimes during 1682. Pratap Chero (1000/1000), Raj Bir Narayan of Panchet (700/300) Amar Singh of Bhojpur (1000/800) were also given ranks in the time of Shahjahn. During the reign of Aurangzeb no further promotions were given to any of the chiefs.

During the war of succession among the sons of Shahjahan, all the four sons approached several chiefs of Bihar and sought their help. Princes Shah Shuja and Dara Shikoh, both appealed to Raja Dal Singh of Gidhaur to help them with his arm retainers. Dara Shikoh persuaded Dal Singh to capture Kharakpur as its chief Raja Bahroz had declined to help him and preferred to support Prince Shah Shuja. Dara Shikoh also rewarded Koklat *Ujjainia* (Gokul Chand *Ujjainias,* a rival of Amar Singh, the chief of Bhojpur), by promoting him to the rank of 1000 *zat* and 800 *sawar* for his help in the war against his brother. Raja Bahroz of Kharakpur helped prince Shah Shuja till the battle of Samugarh (29 May, 1658). Thereafter he went over to Aurangzeb and helped him against Shah Shuja. Other chiefs also sided with one or the other prince in the succession war. However after the accession of Aurangzeb also the position of the chiefs of Bihar could not improve.

The relation between the chiefs and the Mughal administration were generally not very cordial. During the reign of Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb also several chiefs rebelled and the imperial administration took very strong action after suppressing their rebellions. Raja Pratap *Ujjainia*

rebelled against the Mughals in 1637. He was arrested and executed in Patna and his chieftaincy (Bhojpur) was brought under *Khalsa* and Nemat Khan, son of Sayid Khan was deputed to look after the affairs of Bhojpur. However after a lapse of nearly twelve years, his son Amar Singh with the help of Prince Shah Shuja, was able to get back his chieftaincy. The case of Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur in this connection is quite unique and merits our attention. In 1606 he rebelled and in the battle fought with the imperial army posted in Bihar he was killed. It appears that after his death his state was brought under *Khalsa* and was restored to his son Toral Mal (named Roz Afzun after conversion) after some time on the condition of his embracing Islam. In the reign of Shahjahan also Raja Udho Singh of Garhi was recognized as the legal surccesor only on the condition of his conversion to Islam. We don't have much information about Raja Udho Singh but Raja Roz Afzun and his successor Raja Bahroz enjoyed important position after conversion to Islam. Some of them such as *Ujjainias* of Bhojpur. Kharakpur, Palamau and Panchet were absorbed in the Mughal administration and were given *mansabs* But the *Rajas* of Gidhaur, Champaran, Kalyanpur, Kokhra, Seor etc were not given any *mansab* although they rendered military services as and when the Mughal administration required.

The chieftains were required to pay tribute (*Peshkash*) as a mark of submission. However the information in this regard is so little that it is difficult to determine the exact amount of *Peshkash* paid by the chiefs of Bihar. It is also not clear whether it was yearly or half yearly. *Peshkash* was generally presented at the time of submission or whenever the emperor, princes or their representative (high *mansabdars* or commander etc.) passed

through their territories. It was paid either in cash or kind. When in kind, it consisted of valuable commodities or the rarities of the region. In Bihar besides cash, elephants were the main items to be presented as *Peshkash.* The region of Kokhra being rich in diamonds its Raja invariably included diamonds in his *Peshkash.* In certain chieftaincies the administration arbitrarily fixed *Peshkash* at a very high rate and as the chieftains failed to pay the amount the states were invaded by the imperial armies and forced to pay the amount. If they failed, the chieftaincies were brought under *Khalsa.*

In view of ensuring the fidelity of the chiefs, whether *mansabdars* or *non mansabdars,* they were required to send their sons or kinsmen as hostages to the court. Hari Singh, son of Puran Mal of Gidhaur, was kept as a hostage at Delhi for the good conduct of Puran Mal.

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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **"Mughal Administration and the Zamindars of Bihar"** submitted by **Mr. Tahir Hussain Ansari** for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is the original research work of the candidate and is suitable for submission to the examiners for evaluation.

(Prof. Afzal Husain)
Supervisor

CONTENTS

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Aligarh **Tahir Hussain Ansari**

ABBREVIATION

Ain	*Ain-i-Akbari*
AN	*Akbarnama*
ASB	Asiatic Society of Bengal
BPP	Bengal Past and Present
Gaz.	Gazetteers
IESHR	Indian Economic and Social History Review
IHR	Indian Historical Review
IHRC	Indian Historical Record Commission
JASB	Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal
JBORS	Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society
JBRS	Journal of Bihar Research Society
JPRS	Journal of Pakistan Research Society
KBL	Khuda Bakhsh Library
KPJRI	Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute
MU	*Maasir-ul Umara*
OUP	Oxford University Press
PIHC	Proceeding of Indian History Congress
TA	*Tabaqat-i Akbari*
TU	*Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*

Chapter – I

INTRODUCTION

During the Mughal period we find references of a large number of territorial chiefs in almost every part of Northern India. Locally they were known as *rajas, ranas, rais, raos, rawats* etc. while in the contemporary and near contemporary Persian chronicles they have been referred as *zamindars* and *marzabans* and usually as *Kalantaran* and *Buzurg*.[1] They were mostly hereditary chiefs who ruled over their respective territories.[2] In short these autonomous or *semi-autonomous zamindars* constituted an important element in medieval Indian polity. They commanded not only a considerable part of the economic resources of the empire but also military power. After the conquest of Hindustan, Babur informs us that one-sixth of its total revenues came from the territories of the chiefs. He writes:

> "The revenue of the countries now held by me (1528 A.D.) from Bhira to Bihar, is fifty-two crores as will be known in detail. Eight or nine crores of this are from the *parganas* of *rais* and the *rajas* who have submitted in the past (to the Sultans of Delhi), receive allowance and maintenance".[3]

According to Arif Qandhari, one of the contemporary historian of Akbar's reign, there were two or three hundred *rajas* and *zamindars* who were for long in possession of strong forts.[4] Each of these *rajas* and

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1. Abul Fazl in *Akbarnama,* has used the last three words.
2. Ahsan Raza Khan, *The Chieftains in the Mughal Empire during the reign of Akbar*, Shimla, 1977, p. 1.
3. Babur, (tr. Beveridge) *Baburnama*, pp. 520-21.
4. Arif Qandhari, *Tarikh-i-Akbari* or *Tarikh-i-Arif Qandhari* ed. Imtiaz Ali Arabi (Rampur, 1962), p. 47.

zamindars commanded an army of their own generally consisting of their clansmen and the total numbers of their troops as Abul Fazl tells us, stood at forty four lakhs comprising 384,558 cavalry, 4,277,057 infantry; 1863 elephants, 4260 guns and 4500 boats.[5]

Moreland was the first historian to draw our attention to the importance of the chiefs in medieval India. He defined *zamindar* as "vassal chiefs". He also pointed out that the *zamindars* could not exist in territories under the direct control of the Mughal state.[6] However according to him Bengal was an exception to this practice.[7] After him, P. Saran in his work *Provincial Government of the Mughals* has highlighted the position and role of the chieftains in the Mughal empire by listing the principalities of a few of them. He also defined *zamindar* as 'vassal chiefs' and like Moreland he also believed that the *zamindars* could not be found in all parts of the empire.[8] But Irfan Habib who on the basis of the study of *Ain-i-Akbari* pointed out that the *zamindars* were to be found in every part of the empire questioned this opinion.[9] Actually Moreland committed this mistake because of an error in Blochmann's standard edition of the *Ain-i Akbari*. Blochmann did not reproduce the statistics under the Account of the Twelve Provinces in their original tabular form. He not only dispersed with the columns of the original tables, but also dropped, without any explanation, the column headings. Moreland therefore could not notice the

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5. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Delhi, 1856, p. 120.
6. W.H. Moreland, *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, Cambridge, 1929, pp. 122, 279.
7. Ibid., pp. 191-94.
8. P. Saran, *Provincial Government of the Mughal* (1526-1658), Allahabad, 1941, p. 111.
9. Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System of the Mughal India (1556-1707)*, OUP, 1999, pp. 169-175.

names of the castes entered against each *pargana* in these tables which belong to a column headed *zamindar* in the manuscript.[10]

As a result of this mistake, Moreland assumed that the *zamindars* were not found in all parts of the empire. However, Irfan Habib in the chapter on the *zamindars* in his book *Agrarian system of Mughal India* had made a detailed discussion on the rights, priviledges, genesis and the composition of the *zamindars* in general. He also mentioned the two categories of *zamindars* : the autonomous chiefs who enjoyed "sovereign power" in their territories and the ordinary *zamindars* who exercised superior rights in land and functioned as collectors of the land revenue.[11]

Nurul Hasan has accepted the universal character of the *zamindars* and has described the position and the role of the chiefs in the Mughal empire. However, he divided the *zamindars* into three categories[12]: (i) the autonomous chiefs, (ii) the intermediary *zamindars* and (iii) the primary *zamindars*. Discussing the features of the autonomous chiefs which is the theme of the present work, he observes that the Mughals (i) admitted a large number of chiefs in the imperial service by conferring *mansab*, important governorships and military commands. (ii) asserted the principle which came to be known as that of 'Paramountcy' according to which they reserved to themselves the right of recognizing the successor of a deceased

10. In the original tables there are eight columns with the following headings: *Parganat* (parganas), Qila (forts), *Arazi* (measured area), *Nagdi* (revenue stated in cash), *suyurghal* (revenue grants), *zamindar* (or *Bumi*), *sawar* (cavalry) and *Piyada* (infantry). In Blochmann's editon all the headings are emitted except for *suyurghal, sawar* and *Piyada* (Irfan Habib, op.cit., pp. 170-171).

11. Irfan Habib, op.cit., p. 147-89.

12. Nurul Hasan, "The Position of the Zaminar in the Mughal Empire", *IESHR*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Delhi, 1964, pp. 107-19.

raja. Thus making a chieftain dependent for his position on the good will of the emperor rather than on his inherent rights, (iii) imposed the obligation of military services upon the chieftains but they were not granted *mansabs*. (iv) entered into the direct relationship with the chieftains and reduced their powers and created a new class of allies. (v) attempted to treat the hereditary dominions of the autonomous chiefs as '*watan jagir*', which meant that theoretically they were supposed to have the status of '*jagirdar*'. (vi) succeeded in compelling the autonomous chiefs to confirm to imperial regulations especially in regard to the maintenance of law and order and the freedom of transit as well as claimed the right to dispense justice to those who appealed to the imperial government against their chiefs.[13] Nurul Hasan also touches upon the different roles the chiefs must have played in the economic and cultural life of the country before and after their submission to the Mughals. However his observations based, as they are on a general survey of the Mughal empire covering a period of about 150 years, need a close region wise and period-wise scrutiny before they can be accepted.[14]

Ahsan Raza Khan in his book '*The Chieftains in the Mughal empire during the reign of Akbar*' has tried to analyse the position and the powers of the chieftains of the *Akbari* provinces of Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Multan, Gujarat, Ajmer, Malwa, Agra, Oudh, Allahabad, Bihar and Bengal and their relation with the Mughal imperial authority. He has identified the principalities of the various chiefs and then examined the manner of their

13. Nurul Hasan, "The Position of the *Zamindar* in the Mughal Empire", *IESHR*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Delhi, 1964, pp. 107-19.

14. Ahsan Raza Khan, op.cit., p. 7.

subjugation and the nature of overlordship established by the Mughals over them.[15] Ahsan Raza Khan has indeed made an in-depth study of the *zamindars*, but his study is confined only to the reign of Akbar and besides that the work is in the nature of a general survey as he had covered the *zamindars* of the whole of Akbar's empire. Another shortcoming of his study is that it is mainly based on Persian chronicles with the exception of only few *Rajasthani* sources. Hence the picture of the *zamindars* and their problem presented to us is from the perspective of imperial court. The reaction of the *zamindars* of the imperial policy adopted towards them hardly find any place in the chronicles. Besides that it may also be pointed that baring few articles and research papers on detailed study on the *zamindars* of a particular region or of a (Mughal) *suba* including Bihar so far has been made of Mughal period.

In the present study an attempt is made to present a detailed study of the *zamindars* of a particular region, Bihar during the period of the Great Mughals (from the time of Akbar to the death of Aurangzeb). Besides, using Persian sources we have also consulted a number of local sources including family records in preparation of the present work. However unlike the *zamindars* of the *suba* of Ajmer about whom we get a large number of source material, information about the *zamindars* of Bihar, is very little both in Persian chronicles as well as in local records.

The first problem before us was to identify the prominent *zamindar* families of Bihar because no detailed study of this nature so far had been

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15 . Ahsan Raza Khan, op.cit., pp. 167-176.

attempted. Another problem with which we were faced during the course of our study was, as mentioned above, the paucity of source material about the *zamindars* of Bihar particularly about their relations with the Mughal court after their acceptance of the subordination of the imperial authority. However, we have been able to identify Kharakpur, Bhojpur, Palamau, Gidhaur, Kokhra, Darbhanga, Champaran (Betia Raj), Kalyanpur (Hathwa Raj), Panchet, Seor etc. as important chieftaincies of the *suba.* Some of these chieftaincies were very large having a group of *parganas* under their sway while others were so small that they held only a part of a *pargana.* But still the information about their relation with the Mughal administration was so little that it would not have been possible to make a correct assessment of their position in the Mughal political structure. Therefore we decided to prepare detailed biographical account separately of all the well-known chieftaincies including biographies of their chieftains on the basis of information collected from all possible sources: the contemporary, near contemporary and later Persian sources, European travel accounts, local sources, family records, survey reports and district gazetteers. In this matter we were able to get a lot of information about their relations with the imperial government and in our concluding chapter in the light of these information, we have discussed in detail the relationship of the *zamindars* of Bihar with Mughal administration. It may however be added that we have taken into consideration only those *zamindars* who enjoyed autonomous control over their possession.

It seems now important to briefly discuss the geography of the *suba* with particular reference to the areas under the control of the chieftaincies.

Abul Fazl records that the area of *suba* of Bihar from Gardhi[16] to Rohtas was about 120 *Kos* (300 miles) and its breadth from Tirhut to the northern mountains (Himalayas) was 110 *Kos* (275 miles). On its eastern boundary was *suba* of Bengal and to its west was *suba of* Allahabad and Awadh. On the north and south it was bounded by hills comprising of the Himalayas and Vindhyas mountains respectively.[17] Abul Fazl does not mention any *suba* bordering with *suba* Bihar in north and south. It seems that because of hilly tract and forest areas on both sides of the *suba*, Abul Fazl failed to mention the name of any territorial unit on the north and south of the *suba*, although, on the north of Bihar *suba*, lies Nepal and on the south was Orrisa. Some of the important rivers that flowed over Bihar were Ganga, Sone, Maner, Gandak, Karamnasa and Punpun.[18]

The *suba* of Bihar had seven *sarkars* which were divided into 199 *parganas*. During the reign of Akbar the *suba* was divided in two broad and equal portions of territory, north and south of the river Ganga.

The northern territory was a vast sheet of flat land and it comprised of Saran, Champaran, Hajipur and Tirhut *sarkars*. Tirhut being the most easterly one, contained a strip of lands adjacent to the north of the course of the Ganga in North Bihar and formed the part of *sarkar* Munger. The *sarkar* of Munger chiefly lay to the south of Ganga.[19]

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16 . Gardhi is the old fort now known as Teliagarhi a little to the west of Sahibganj at the point where the Santhal Hills touch the Ganga.

17 . *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. II, p. 66.

18 . Ibid.

19 . "Beams contribution to the Political Geography of the *subahs* of Awadh, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa in the Age of Akbar" (ed) by B.P. Ambasthaya, p. 42.

The southern territory lay to the south of the Ganga and extended upto the range of Vindhaya hills, which separated the lower plains from the elevated mountaineous region. In the west, the southern territory is separated by the river from the *sarkar* of Chunar in *suba* Allahabad. On the east, it is separated from Bengal by a branch of southern hills. The *sarkar* of Bihar in the middle covers about half of the whole of the flat and level area of this great southerly division. The plains of the *sarkar* Munger on the east covered it's a fourth (1/4) part of the entire district with all its mountainous dependencies. The *sarkar* of Rohtas, the southernly and western one situated chiefly between the two rivers of Sone and the Karmanasa. But subsequently the *sarkar* of Shahabad (Bhojpur) was carved out of the old *sarkar* of Rohtas of Akbar's reign.[20]

The southern most region of Bihar *suba* was upland of Chota Nagpur which comprised the sub-division of Palamau, Ramgarah and Chotanagpur. This upland of Chotanagpur is also known by the appellation of Kokrah, more commonly called Nagpur. Beams is of the view that the name Nagpur was derived from the diamond mine of the region.[21] It may be pointed that the entire region was not included in any of the *sarkar*s of *suba* Bihar apparently because the *zamindars* of the area could not be fully subjugated.

A general survey of the geographical distribution of chieftaincies in Bihar shows that most of them were located in the peripheral regions, amidst forests and the hilly tracts of south Bihar. For example, the chieftaincies of

20. Beams contribution to the Political Geography of the *subahs* of Awadh, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa in the Age of Akbar (ed) by B.P. Ambasthaya,, pp. 42-44.

21. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

Kokhra and Palamau were located in south Bihar and were full of forests. The hilly tracts of Munger had the largest number of principalities such as Kharakpur, Gidhaur, Seor etc. Similarly the principalities of Hathwa and Betia Raj in north Bihar were situated by and large in those regions of Saran and Champaran where the forest abounded. The territory of Ujjainias of Bhojpur was also full of forest. The remarks of the Mannucci and Palsaert that in Hindustan the tracts ruled by the *rajas* and the 'princely' *zamindars* are usually to be found only behind mountains and forests seems in complete agreement with the geographical distribution of chieftaincies in Bihar.[22]

The thesis is divided into ten chapters including introduction and conclusion. After the introduction the next eight chapters are devoted to the study of chieftaincies. To illustrate the context of the problem we have prepared detailed political biographies of the chieftains especially from the time of Akbar to the end of Aurangzeb's reign including the events of the war of succession among the sons of Shahjahan. While writing about the chieftains we have taken note of all the developments that have taken place in their relations in the *suba* (of Bihar) as well as at the imperial court. We have also discussed the carrier and achievements of the chiefs at the Mughal court particularly mentioning appointments, awards of *mansabs*, promotions etc. We have particularly mentioned the nature of relationship established after the chieftains accepted the overlordship of the Mughal imperial authority.

In the preparation of the thesis we have consulted almost all the available Persian sources in print as well as in manuscript. We have also used

22. Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, 1653-1708, tr. W. Irwine, Indian Texts Series, Govt. of India, London 1907-08, II, p. 444, Palsaert, *Jahangir's India* ed. and translated from Dutch accounts by W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl, reprint, Delhi, 1972, pp. 58-59.

a number of official documents such as imperial *farmans, nishan and hasbul hukm* issued by Mughal emperors and the princes. European travel accounts have also been used with utmost care. But baring the reign of Akbar the information in Persian sources for the reign of Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb is only in bits and peaces. Similarly in European travel accounts also only brief reference of few chieftaincies are available. Therefore we have also consulted a large number of family records and regional histories which are housed in the Bihar State Archives, Patna, Khuda Baksh Library, Patna; K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna; Patna University Library, Patna; and *Mahafiz Khana* of Darbhanga Raj, Darbhanga. Some of the family accounts such as *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia, Tawarikh-i-Kharakpur Raj Darbhanga, Bhojpur mein Paramaron Ka Itihas 1577 Tak and Ain-i Tirhut* have greatly helped us in filling the gaps and reconstructing the history of some of the chieftaincies. Apart from these works, we have also consulted District Gazetteers, Imperial Gazetteers, Buchanann's Survey accounts of the different districts of Bihar, The Statistical Accounts of Bengal by W.W. Hunter, M. Martin's accounts of Bihar in *Eastern India* and Firminger's Fifth Revenue Report in the preparation of our work. Research papers and books published in English, Hindi and Urdu on the theme connected with our topic have also been used in the preparation of the present study.

Chapter – II

THE KHARAKPUR RAJ

Kharakpur was one of the most important chieftaincy of Bihar during the Mughal period. Presently, Kharakpur is a small village in the Munger subdivision, situated close to the flank of Kharakpur hills, some 25 miles south-east of the town of Munger and 12 miles from the railway station of Bariarpur[1]. The exact area under the domination of Kharakpur Raj during the Mughal period is not mentioned in any of our contemporary chronicles, but from a *farman* of Jahangir[2], it appears that the chieftaincy comprised of the *Parganas* of Haveli Kharakpur and Sakhrabad, which included places like Parbatpore, Chandori, Kathuria, Chandure, Passai Sathiori, Godda, Damre, Sankhwara Hazar Tuki, Humduo, Amlu Muliya[3] etc. Abul Fazl in *Akbarnama* mentions Raja Sangram Singh as the *zamindar* of Kharakpur and identifies Kharakpur as a *qasba*.[4] But in the *Ain*, it does not find place in the *Mahals* either of *Sarkar* Bihar or of *Sarkar* Munger. However some modern writers are of the view that the chieftaincy of Kharakpur was in the *Sarkar* of Munghyr.[5] According to local traditions, the entire area under the domination of the Kharakpur chiefs was originally held by an aborginal tribe called Khetauris and the rulers were about 52 tribal chiefs of Khetauri.[6] Sometimes in the beginning of the 16^{th} century, three Rajput brothers named, Dandu Rai, Basdeo Rai and Mahender Rai

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1. L.S.S.O. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers,* Munghyr, Calcutta, 1904,Vol. 17, P. 214.
2. The *farman* is cited in A.R. Khan, *Suba of Bihar under the Mughals 1582-1707* (unpublished thesis) Aligarh , 1985, pp. 179-88.
3. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal,* London 1875, Vol. 15 P. 177, Ahmad R. Khan op. cit. pp. 179-80.
4. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama* III, ed. Maulvi Abdur Rahim, ASB, 1877, p. 107.
5. Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of Mughal Empire*, Delhi. 1982. p. 40.
6. Ahmad R. Khan, op.cit. P. 179.

took service under Raja Sasanka, the Khetauri chief of Kherhi, a small principality some ten or twelve miles south east of Munghyr. In due course of time, these three Rajput brothers collected a large following of their clansmen, recruited military retainers and rose in revolt against their master. They murdered the Raja and his family members and assumed power. Soon after, in a series of battles, they successfully defeated all the 52 Khetauri Chiefs and Dandu Rai, the eldest of the three brothers, established himself as the territorial chief of the entire Kharakpur region which comprised 53 villages with an estimated area of 190.6 square miles.[7]

Dandu Rai[8] ruled for 22 years and died in 1525, leaving behind two sons Rup Shahi and Narendra Shahi. Rup Shahi (1525-39) the eldest son succeeded to the throne and Narendra Shahi continued as ruler of Baikat with its headquarters at Kharahi.[9] Rup Shahi ruled for 14 years. On his death in 1539, his eldest son Sangram Shahi became the ruler of the chieftaincy.[10]

An authentic history of Kharakpur chieftaincy however begins only after the accession of Sangram Singh.[11] From now onwards, we start getting references of the chieftaincy in contemporary historical accounts.

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7. L.S.S.O Malley, op. cit. P. 214. Also see Hunter op. cit. P. 177.
8. His brothers Basdeo Rai and Mahendra Rai settled at Bita Mandar in Bhagalpur and Mauza Sawaee in *Pargana* Shahruwy respectively (Hunter, op. cit. P. 178).
9. Munsi Mahadev Lal *Tawarikh-i-Kharakpur Raj*, Darbhanga, Miratul Hind Press, 1884. Kalipada Mitra, 'History of Kharagpur Raj' B.P.P. *Journal of the Calcutta Historical Society*, Vol. LXXII, (72) S.No. 135, 1953, P. 50. However Hunter and Martin are of the view that Rup Shah was the only son of Dandu Roy. (Hunter, op. cit. P. 177 and Martin, *Eastern India*, II, P. 237.
10. Kalipada Mitra, op. cit., p. 50. The contention of Q. Ahmad thatafter the death of Dandu Rai Sangram Singh succeeded to the throne, is not supported by any epigraphic evidence (Q. Ahmad, *A Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscription of Bihar (A.H. 640-1200)*, K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, 1973.
11. In the fifth year of his rule, one day he went on a hunting expedition and happened to pass through Basanpur now known as Rajghat. Finding the place pleasant he took out his sword (Khadg or Kharag), placed it on the ground and named it Kharagpur and made it his capital (K.P. Mitra, op.cit. P. 50). But according to Rash Bihari Bose, Sangram Shah, the grand father

The first reference of Sangram Singh in our sources occur in the events of 1573-74 when Akbar went to Patna alongwith Munim Khan to suppress the rebellion of Afghans. Abul Fazl writes that Afghans could not withstand the victorious troops and fled without offering a battle. After that Raja Sangram Singh, the *zamindar* of Kharakpur and many other *zamindars* of that part of the country presented themselves before the emperor and offered their submission.[12] However on what terms and condition the offer of submission was accepted had not been mentioned by any of the contemporary sources including *Akbarnama.*

The next reference that we have in our sources related to the events of 1580-81 when Raja Todar Mal was dispatched to suppress the rebellion of Masum Khan Kabuli, who had established himself in the region of Munghyr near the chieftaincy of Kharakpur. Abul Fazl tells us that Khawaja Shamsuddin who was captured by Masum Khan Kabuli and was languishing in the custody was helped by Arab Bahadur an accomplice of the rebels to escape and seek shelter with Raja Sangram Singh. Shortly afterwards other imperialists also escaped and came to Kharakpur and an army of 12000 *sawars* assembled to challenge the rebels.[13] About this time, a reinforcement under Raja Todar Mal also reached there. In the offensive

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of Beroj, having conquered 52 Khetauri Rajas who held sway in different parts of the country, came to the bank of the river Man, in order to select a site for his capital. Suddenly a hare (Kharaghosh) came running from the neighbouring jungles. It was pursued by a dog, but the hare turned upon its pursuer, and killed the hound. The spot where this incident took place, was chosen by the warrior chief as the site for his capital, and in commemoration of the wonderful occurrences, was called Kharagpur (now written Kharakpur, from Kharagosh). Some scholars are of the view that name Kharagpur is derived from Kharga Singh, who is said to have completed the subjection of the country conquered by his brother Sangram Singh (Babu Rash Bihari Bose "A visit to Kharagpur" *JASB*, 1871, P. 24).

12. *Akbarnama* III. P.P. 107-108

13. *Akbarnama*, tr.Blochmann, P. 468.

that was launched against the rebels Masum Khan Kabuli, was defeated. Although *Akbarnama* makes no direct reference of Raja Sangram Singh having joined the imperial army in the war against the rebels, but the fact that the imperialist were given shelter in Kharakpur where they reassembled and launched an offensive against the rebels clearly indicate that Raja Sangram Singh played an important role in the suppression of this rebellion. Todar Mal was so much pleased with his support at this crucial juncture that he styled Raja Sangram Singh as his *farzand* (son).[14]

In 1583-84, Afghans under Masum Khan Farkhandi once again unfurled the banner of rebellion and expelled imperial officers. Shahbaz Khan Kamboh was specially deputed to suppress the rebellion. Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur, Dalpat Ujjainiya of Bhojpur and certain other chieftains of the *Suba* of Bihar came out openly to help Shahbaz Khan in his effort to suppress the rebellion. Abul Fazl writes that although Masum Khan Farakhandi was not captured but with the help of local chiefs, the rebels were defeated and their power declined considerably.[15]

Although several local chiefs joined together in helping imperial army to suppress the Afghan rebels but within themselves the chiefs were extremely hostile to each other. Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur and Sangram Singh of Kharakpur, the two neighbouring chiefs on account of some family feud were bitter enemies.[16]Puran Mal succeeded in winning over the friendship of Shahbaz Khan and with his help launched an attack on

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14. *Maasir-ul-Umara*, tr. Beveridge, vol. P. 728.
15. *Akbarnama* III, P. 418.
16. For details of their family feud, see chapter on Gidhaur.

Kharakpur and forced Raja Sangram Singh to seek shelter in the forest ravines. Puran Mal after this victory became quite powerful in the whole region. But shortly afterwards, an unfortunate incident suddenly changed the whole situation in favour of Raja Sangram Singh.

Abul Fazl writes that a Rajput retainer who was in the service of Puran Mal and had lately left him and joined Raja Sangram Singh plotted to kill Shahbaz Khan and actually committed the crime by killing a person mistaking him to be Shahbaz Khan. When Shahbaz Khan came to know of the incident, he became suspicious of Puran Mal and immediately imprisoned him.[17] Although Puran Mal was not involved in it and as soon as he came to know of the incident, he got the assailant arrested and killed, but he lost the confidence and favour of Shahbaz Khan. Shortly afterwards Shahbaz Khan was transferred to Bengal and Mirza Yusuf Muhammad Khan Mashhadi was dispatched from Awadh to take charge of Bihar. As a consequence of these developments Raja Sangram Singh was able to re-establish himself in Kharakpur.

During the governorship of Mirza Yusuf Muhammad Khan Mashhadi and Said Khan (July 1585-August 1587) our sources hardly make any reference about the activities of Raja Sangram Singh and Raja Puran Mal. But the later evidences suggest that Raja Sangram Singh and Raja Puran Mal became independent and continued to defy imperial authority during all these years.

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17. *Akbarnama III*, PP. 460-61 See chapter on Gidhaur. Also see S.H. Askari, *Medieval Bihar Sultanate and Mughal Period*, Patna, 1990, P. 120.

In 1587, Raja Man Singh was appointed governor of Bihar. Abul Fazl writes that the Raja Man Singh administered Bihar very competently and as a consequence, refractory chiefs became obedient.[18] He particularly mentions that he forced Raja Sangram Singh and Raja Puran Mal to accept the overlordship of Mughals and offer *Peshkash* of elephants and other rarities of the area.[19] He further adds that during his campaign of conquest of Orissa in 1592, Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur, Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur and certain other chiefs of Bihar accompanied him.[20]

Raja Sangram Singh remained loyal to the Mughals till the death of Akbar(1605). But taking advantage of accession crisis, Raja Sangram Singh once again attempted to regain his independence. Jahangir in his memoirs writes that Raja Sangram Singh collected an army of 4,000 troopers and a large number of foot soldiers and came out openly to challenge the imperial authority.[21] Baz Bahadur, the governor of Bihar took immediate action and in a battle fought in Kharakpur, the Raja himself was killed and the rebels were completely defeated.[22] The same incident on the authority of local traditions has been discussed differently by Hunter in his famous work *A Statistical Account of Bengal* (vol. 15).

Hunter writes that Jahangir, having come to know of the rebellious activities at Kharakpur, issued an order to Raja Sangram Singh to present himself at the Court in Delhi. As the order was ignored, the emperor

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18. *Akbarnama III*, P. 576.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid. P. 611, Also see S.H. Askari, op. cit. P. 121.
21. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* I, ed. Saiyid Ahmad, Ghazipur & Aligarh 1863-64, P. 39.
22. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 39 Matamid Khan, *Iqbal Nama-i Jahangiri*, ed. Abdul Haiyi and Ahmad Ali, Bib. Ind. Calcutta, 1875. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maasir-ul Umara*, II, ed. Abdur Rahim and Ashraf Ali, Bib. Ind. Calcutta, Vol. II, Pt. I, 1888-91, P. 218.

directed Jahangir Quli Khan, the *Subedar* of Bihar to suppress the rebels. Baz Bahadur[23] a well-known commander was dispatched to Kharakpur. Raja Sangram Singh assembled his soldiers and positioned himself at the defile of Markan, leading to his capital. The battle continued for several days without any success. While these operations were in progress a foot soldier in the service of Raja Sangram Singh went over to enemy's camp and offered to assassinate his chief for a price. The offer was immediately accepted by the imperialists.

The paid assassin carried out his job successfully and the Raja was killed. The death of the Raja threw his army into total confusion and when they were about to flee, Rani Chandrajot the wife of the deceased Raja encouraged them to stand their ground. She raised her son Toral Mal to the throne and continued the struggle for several months. Baz Bahadur, not very sure of his victory became desperate to end the contest with a woman, and agreed for a compromise. He promised to intercede on her behalf provided she and her son agreed to present themselves before the emperor. The Rani accepted the proposal and accompanied him to Delhi. But as soon as they reached Delhi, the Rani's son Toral Mal was imprisoned.[24] But on the request of Baz Bahadur, he was released and presented before the emperor. The emperor was highly impressed with Toral Mal's charming manners and excellent ways of conversation. He was treated very well at the court and induced to change his religion which he

23. Jahangir Quli was the title of Baz Bahadur, but Hunter confuses Baz Bahadur as an another commander.

24. However, it is said that the Rani (wife of Toral Mal), became *sati* on hearing that her husband had been taken prisoner at Delhi and there put to death. (R. Bose "A visit to Kharagpur" in the district of Munghyr. *JASB*, vol. XL, 1871. P. 25).

agreed to do. He was given the title of Roz Afzun and was married with the daughter of a noble.[25]

In *Tawarikh-i-Kharakpur Raj Darbhanga,* the same incident is described with more details. The *Tawarikh* writes that Baz Bahadur (Jahangir Quli Khan) proceeded with a large army to punish the rebel and reached Marg Ghat near Kharakpur where several clashes took place. But as the royal army failed to defeat the rebel, Baz Bahadur through dubious means won a relative of the Raja to kill him.[26]

Although the entire story might not be true but the substance of the account is corroborated by the contemporary evidences. From *Tuzuk* also it is clear that Raja Sangram was killed in the battle and his son was converted to Islam and given the title of Roz Afzun.[27]

M. Martin, on the basis of some local traditions also discusses the event but adds that Toral Mal after being released was appointed as *Morchulburdar (*or person who fans the King with peacock's feathers) and during the course of his presence at the court, in a hunting expedition killed a tiger single handedly with a sword. The king was greatly impressed with his achievement and raised him to the position of a high noble and converted him and his three sons to Islam.[28] The Raja was given the name

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25. W.W. Hunter, op. cit. PP. 178-81.
26. Munsi Mahadev Lal, *Tawarikh-i Kharakpur Raj Darbhanga.*
27. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 39 & 145.
28. M. Martin, *Eastern India* II, 1976 Delhi, P.P. 237-38. Although Kalipada Mitra describes the event in the same way but says that after the feat of killing a lion, the king asked him to renounce his ancestral religion and embrace the faith of Islam. Accordingly Toral Mal embraced Islam of his own free will. At that very moment the king presented with his own hand a cup of water from his own decanter and Toral Mal without any hesitation drank the water and also made his three sons drink the water ("History of Kharagpur Raj" *BPP* vol. LXXII (72) S.No. 135, 1953).

of Raja Roz Afzun and was married to a daughter of Baz Bahadur, the governor of Bihar. The young lady however, considered this marriage as highly degrading and refused to honour the marriage. Roz Afzun's mother being extremely unhappy complained to the king of these developments. Martin makes us believe that on the complaint of the Rani, the emperor again married Raja Roz Afzun to the daughter of Prince Murad Bakhsh and raised him to the rank of 3000. His two sons were also given the rank of 1000 each. The youngest son became a hermit and obtained two *mauzas*, in rent free grant. The emperor also assigned the *Parganas* of Haveli, and Kajra as *Sanak* (table expense) and parts of Kharakpoor as *Altumgha*. A *mauza* was also fixed as *Jagir* for the family. Besides, they were authorized to collect various cesses *(Rusum-i-zamindari)* which included *Milkiat, Chanda, Kannugo, Nakudi* and *Nankar*. The Raja after obtaining these favours, was allowed to visit his *watan* and his second son obtained the office of *Morchulbardar*.[29] Munsi Mahadev Lal and Hunter, as mentioned earlier, have also referred that Toral Mal was married to Murad Bakhsh's daughter, a cousin of Jahangir and have given her name as Bega Sultana.[30] Hunter further writes that it is commonly believed that she was not a royal princess but belonged to a respected family of a noble.[31] He also tells us that after the marriage, Jahangir issued a *farman* appointing Roz Afzun as the Raja of Kharakpur investing him with the authority and rights of *milki,*

29. M. Martin, *Eastern India*, op.cit.

30. Munsi Mahadev Lal, op. cit. However M. Martin mention that special grants were given to Bega Sultana, the Muslim wife of Raja Roz Afzun. He writes that *pargana* Haveli and Kharakpur was given to Bega Sultana for her residence as well as household expenses, Laheta for her *churi* (bangle) expenses, Singhol for her *Sindur* (vermillion) and so forth. These *parganas* are still in existence in their original names in Munghyr district. The major part of these grants had been made at the time of Toral Mal's marriage with Bega Sultana (*Eastern India*, II, PP. 237-333).

31. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 178-81.

chaudhari, and *Kanungo* with all *rusum* or dues in the Mahalat Kharakpur,and as subsistence *zamindari* or *nankar*, of one eighth of *Pargana* Sahrui. At the same time *Pargana* Haveli Kharakpur was allotted to him to support a fitting establishment; and *Pargana* Kujra as *Altamgha Jagir*, *Parganas* Sakhrabadi Parbatpara, Chanda Katuria, Chandwa Parsai, Sathiari, Godda, Danra Sakhwara, Hazar Tuki, Handwa and Amlu Mutiya were also given as *Altamgha Jagirs* to his elder son. His third son, Thakur Sinh who became a hermit, was assigned 4040 *bighas* of land in the villages of Betia and Agia in *Pargana* Hazar Tuki in *madad-i-mash*. Soon afterwards Toral Mal returned to Kharakpur with his wife, leaving his son, Abdul Shah at Court, as a hostage for his fidelity.[32]

The above information is only partially corroborated from the *Tuzuk* and other contemporary sources and therefore needs some explanation. *Tuzuk* tells us that after the suppression of the revolt and the killing of Raja Sangram Singh, the territory of Kharakpur was first assigned to Islam Khan for a year in *inam* and thereafter to Afzal Khan who was appointed as the governor of Bihar.[33] After that we have no information about Kharakpur until 1615 when Jahangir writes that Raja Roz Afzun who was one of the princes *(Raja Zadhai muatabar Suba-Bihar)* of Bihar and who had been from his youth one of the permanent servants of the court, having been honoured by admission into Islam[34] was made Raja of the dominion of his father, Raja Sangram Singh. He was given an elephant and ordered to go to his native place.[35]

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32. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 178-81.
33. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, op.cit., P. 69.
34. Ibid. P. 145. *Maasir-ul-Umara*, op.cit., p. 218.
35. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, op.cit.*, p. 145.

It seems that there is an element of exaggeration in local traditions about his marriage with Murad's daughter, which Hunter himself doubts (we know that none of the Mughal princess were married even to a Rajput chief of Ajmer *suba*. They, after Jahangir's reign, were rarely married to a Mughal nobles, because Mughal Emperor considered none of them equal to their status) but the other details are largely corroborated.[36] For example the details of assignments, if compared with the *farman* of Jahangir referred to first page of this chapter, confirms almost the same area having been granted to him.

Thereafter we have only two references about Raja Roz Afzun during the reign of Jahangir and both these references relate to the period of Khurram's revolt. The relations of Khurram with the Court which were already strained due to his reluctance to proceed to Qandhar immediately, were further complicated because of his rashness in connection with the issue of an assignment of *Jagir*. Sometimes after the occupation of Qandhar when the preparation for the mobilization of an army was going on and Khurram was ordered to proceed with the army, he applied for the assignment of the *Jagir* of Dholpur *Pargana*. But before the order could be issued, Nur Jahan got the order issued in favour of Shahriyar who deputed Shariful Mulk, who held the office of the *faujdar* of Dholpur to take charge of his *Jagir*. Khurram on the other hand being sure of getting the *Jagir* assigned to him, sent Darya Khan to take the charge of the *Jagir*. When Darya Khan reached Dholpur, he was challenged by Sharif-ul-Mulk and as a consequence a battle was fought in which Sharif-ul-Mulk was defeated and expelled from Dholpur.[37]

36. Hunter, op. cit.
37. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, op.cit., p. 346.

The action of Khurram was an open defiance of imperial authority. Jahangir became extremely unhappy but as the situation was serious, in place of taking any tough decision, he dispatched Raja Roz Afzun to enquire as to why the prince had taken such a bold step. He was also ordered to behave properly and with politeness.[38] It seems that the mission was not very successful and Roz Afzun returned to court.

Soon afterwards, Khurram rebelled openly. Raja Roz Afzun was now sent to summon prince Pervez immediately to the court to lead a campaign against the rebel prince.[39] We have no other reference of the Raja during the later years of Jahangir's reign. At the end of Jahangir's reign Raja Roz Afzun held the rank of 1500/700 only.[40]

After the accession of Shahjahan, Raja Roz Afzun was confirmed in his *zamindari*, and in the year 1628, he was deputed with Mahabat Khan against Nazar Muhammad Khan, the ruler of Balkh[41] who had invaded Afghanistan and put to siege the fort of Kabul. The Mughal commander of Kabul, Khanjar Khan fought bravely and for sometime resisted the onslaught of the Uzbegs. The Emperor being informed of the continued pressure of the Uzbegs appointed Mahabat Khan and also dispatched Lashkar Khan to take charge of Kabul *Suba*. When Nazar Muhammad came to know of these developments, he raised the siege of Kabul and retreated to his country. The news of Nazar Muhammad's withdrawal was reported to Mahabat Khan at Sirhind, where he stopped to await for further instructions from the court.

38. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, op.cit., p. 346.
39. Ibid. P. 354.
40. *Maasir-ul-Umara*, op cit., p. 218.
41. Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshahnama*, (ed.) Kabir Al Din Ahmad, Abdur Rahim and W.N. Lees, Bib. Ind. Calcutta, 1866-72, Vol. I. Pt. I, P. 213.

Shortly afterwards the Emperor ordered him to return to the court.[42] It appears that Raja Roz Afzun also returned to the court alongwith Mahabat Khan.

Raja Roz Afzun once again accompanied Mahabat Khan to suppress the rebellion of Jujhar Singh Bundela[43] (1628-29). A number of leading nobles such as Islam Khan, Khan-i-Jahan and Abdullah Khan were also ordered to accompany Mahabat Khan. The emperor himself marched to Gwalior on January 3, 1629. The Mughal forces devasted Bundelkhand region where the rebel had taken the refuge. The garrison fought bravely and 3,000 of them were slain and the Mughals captured Iraj. As the dissatisfaction arose among his own people, Jujhar Singh Bundela was compelled to sue for piece. On the request of Mahabat Khan the Emperor pardoned the offences of the rebel Raja. Jujhar Singh agreed to pay one and a half million of rupees as war indemnity and forty elephants as *Peshkash*.[44]

Sometimes after the end of the rebellion of Jujhar Singh Bundela another very senior noble Khan-i-Jahan Lodi rebelled and after creating confusion in North India for a long time escaped to Deccan. The Emperor dispatched a large army to punish him.[45] Raja Roz Afzun was also deputed to serve under Iradat Khan, who was given the overall command of the operation. It seems that Roz Afzun played an important role in the suppression of the rebellion because after the campaign was over, in reward for his meritorious service, 100 *sawars* were added to his rank.[46]

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42. Lahori, op.cit., pp. 214-18.
43. Ibid., p. 240. *Masir-ul-Umara*, op.cit., pp. 218-19.
44. Lahori, op.cit., pp. 240-46.
45. Ibid., p. 295.
46. Ibid., p. 316, M.U., op.cit.

Raja Roz Afzun was again sent to the Deccan in 1633-34 under Prince Shuja.[47] When Prince Shuja reached Deccan, Mahabat Khan met him on the way and advised him to march directly to Parenda.[48] Prince Shuja alongwith Raja Roz Afzun and other nobles put to siege the fort of Parenda. Raja Roz Afzun fought bravely and forced Shahji, the Maratha *sardar* to go back to Junair. A number of Raja Roz Afzun's retainers were killed in the battle.[49]

Raja Roz Afzun died sometimes in 1635.[50] At the time of his death he held the rank of 2000/1000.[51]

Raja Roz Afzun was, a very important chieftain of Bihar. He played an important role in the consolidation and expansion of Mughal empire. He enjoyed the confidence of both Emperor Jahangir and Shahjahan. On two occasions, as mentioned above, he was sent by the emperor to Prince Khurram with his message, when the prince openly defied imperial authority. He was also asked to personally enquire as to why the prince had behaved in such an arrogant manner.

Raja Roz Afzun not only served to help the Mughal authorities in and around Bihar but was also deputed to serve the imperial army in Kabul, Balkh and Deccan.

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47. Lahori, op.cit., vol. I, Pt. I, 537.
48. Ibid., p. 34.
49. Lahori op.cit., vol. I, Pt. II, p. 39. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahan Nama*, Tr. A.R. Fuller, edited & comp. By W.E. Bengley and Z.A. Desai, O.U.P. Delhi, 1990, p. 131.
50. Munsi Mahadev Lal, M. Martin, K.P. Mitra, and R. Bose mention the death of Raja in 1631, which does not seem to be true. The Persian chronicles clearly mentions that Raja Roz Afzun accompanied Prince Shuja in the expedition of Deccan to capture Parenda fort during 1633-34. (Lahori, vol. I & Pt. I, p. 537). In the 8th r.y. of Shahjahan, the Raja's *mansab* increased to 2000 *zat* and 100 *sawar* and during the same year 1085 A.H. (1634-35), he died (M.U. op.cit.) (Lahori, vol. I, Pt. II, p. 67). Hunter and O'Malley also mentioned his death in 1635.
51. Lahori, op.cit., p. 303. Mohd. Saleh Kamboh, *Amal-i-Saleh*, ed. G. Yazdani, Bib. Ind. Calcutta, 1917-46, vol. II, p.4 59.

Raja Bahroz of Kharakpur (1635-1675)

After the death of Raja Roz Afzun, his son Bahroz presented himself at the court. Emperor Shah Jahan received him favourably and recognized him as the ruler of Kharakpur.[52] His brothers, Adil Singh and Thakur Singh were apparently not admitted in imperial service.

According to family records Raja Bahroz after succeeding to the throne of Kharakpur Raj, was dispatched to suppress the rebellion in Kabul. After the successful completion of the campaign, in reward for his service he was assigned Chakla of Midnapur in *Jagir* in addition to his *watan*, where he built a town and named it Kharakpur.[53] However he held the rank of 700/550 at the end of Shahjahan's reign.[54] Thereafter we do not find any reference to Raja Bahroz in the chronicles of Shahjahan's reign. In the local sources also his services to imperial cause have not been recorded. However, we do find the reference of Raja Bahroz during the war of succession among the sons of Shahjahan.

As is well known Shahjahan fell ill in Sept. 1656 and within few days his condition became critical. Dara Shikoh who was the eldest son and whom Shahjahan had also nominated as his successor was present at the court, not

52. Munshi Mahadev Lal, op.cit., Kalipada Mitra, op.cit., p. 52.

53. O'Malley, op.cit. p. 215. K.P. Mitra, op.cit., pp. 52-55. However M. Martin writes : that Chukla Midnapur in Birbhum district was restored to Raja which have been since lost. He further adds that Raja Bahroz was then appointed *Sahur Nishan* or royal standard bearer and returned to enjoy his estates (Eastern India, II, pp. 239-40). While K.K. Basu locates Chakla of Midnapur near Delhi as a *jagir* and said that Bahroz built a tower there and named it Kharakpur after his native place (*The Early History of the Zaminars of Bhagalpur*, B.P.P. vol. XLIII (43) Pt. II, S.NO. 86, April-June 1932), p. 115.

54. Lahori, Vol. II, p. 742. But Qeyamuddin Ahmad says that Raja Bahroz was holding the rank of 700/700 in the 3rd *Julus* of Shahjahan when he was deputed to Qandhar campaign (*A corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscription of Bihar (A.D. 640-1200)*, K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, p. 257).

only nursed his ailing father but also helped him in discharging the important affairs of the Empire. Dara's brothers who were extremely jealous of his closeness to the emperor became suspicious of those development. They believed that Shahjahan had actually expired and Dara Shikoh had usurped the throne. Therefore, Shah Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad after making an understanding among themselves proceeded towards Delhi to fight for the throne of Hindustan with their elder brother Dara Shikoh. The situation became so grave that Mughal nobility too was divided on the issue; almost every important noble was allied with one or the other Prince. The Princes themselves approached the local chiefs for support with the promises of higher *mansabs* and important offices. The *zamindars* of Bihar specially Raja Bahroz, Raja of Gidhaur and the *Ujjainia* chief actually participated in this conflict in the region of Bihar. But all of them were not in one camp although, Shah Shuja who was the first to declare himself king and proceeded towards Delhi to contest Dara Shikoh, contacted some of these *zamindars* soon after reaching Patna. He was able to get the support of Raja Bahroz of Kharakpur and through his help the *Ujjainia* chief also joined his camp. To firm up the alliance, Shah Shuja also issued *farmans* and *Nishans* with lots of assurances.[55] In one of the *Nishan* issued on behalf of Shah Shuja, it had been clearly mentioned that Raja Bahroz managed to bring Amar Singh to the side of Shah Shuja and this fact had been acknowledge by the Prince.

The *Nishan* runs as follows :

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55. T.U. II, p. 57. Also B.P. Ambashthaya, Some Historical Papers of Dumraon Raj in the Shahabad District in Bihar, *IHC* 22, Session, 1959, Guhawati, pp. 271-72.

> "The best of the peers and contemporaries, worthy of reviewing favours and privileges, Amar Singh, being duly honoured with royal gifts may know that in the present time the fact of having upright faith and true intentions of the one (Amar Singh) accustomed to bravery, deserving of favours, privileges, gifts, and kindness, has been brought to the notice of enlightened and the holiest (Shuja) by Raja Bahroz who is noted for his bravery and valour. Therefore this order of high magnitude and conspicuous greatness reviewed the honour of being issued and dispatched to the effect that immediately on receipt of this high, auspicious and prosperous *Nishan* you (Amar Singh), being contented in every way, should come to the service of the wholly fortunate with or many means you can afford to collect so that after kissing the threshold you shall be rewarded with royal bounties and especial favours. Take this as urgent". It was written in 1068 A.H. (1658)".

Dara shikoh on the other hand was also actively making efforts to get the support of important chiefs of the region, an even issued a *farman* on behalf of Shahjahan to the Raja of Gidhaur with promise of not only high *mansab* but even the chieftaincy of Kharakpur Raj if he so desired.[56] The *farman* runs as follows :

> "The best among the grandees and the like beings, the great among the equals and the contemporaries, worthy of receiving favours and privileges, Raja Dal Singh, the *zamindar* of Gidhaur, being duly honoured with royal gifts, may know that in the present time the message of Sulaiman Shukoh Bahadur, the able and brave son, the fortunate and the well behaved, the all conquering and ever-fortunate by Lord's grace, the son of the ruling royal house, and of highest descent, having the blessings of God, the pearl of royal crown and of sublime Majesty, the star of sparkling wisdom and prudence, the cloud of showering generosity, privilege and power, ever-watering the flower of fortune, the all-embracing and all powerful prince

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56 . Its classification number in Manuscript section of the Patna University Library is 31. Also see, B.P. Ambashthaya, Some Farmans, Sanads, Nishans and Inscriptions in Bihar, *JBRS*, vol. XLIII, Sept.-Dec. 1957, Pt. III & IV, pp. 226-227.

> expansive as sky, the good natured, reached (Dara) that he (Dal Singh) the best among the peers and contemporaries, under the guidance of the fortune, the faithful servant and the well-wisher of the empire, is treading the path of loyalty and would escort the royal force through his land against the cowardly and the disrespectful Shuja who did not discriminate between right and wrong, and after duly punishing him (Shuja), would drive him (Shuja) out of Munghyr and its quarter and would thus force him to lead the life of adversity. This news proved highly agreeable to me (Dara), and he (Dal Singh) was assured that in return for this service of his (Dal Singh's) he (Dal Singh) would have access to the presence of the emperor and would review royal favours and rewards and a good *mansab* and a good title; if he (Dal Singh) would want to get hold of the *zamindari* of Kharakpur from the hands of the unfortunate Bahroz, I (Dara) would agree to it and that he (Dal Singh) might uproot him (Bahroz) and occupy his (Bahroz's) territory. He (Dal Singh) was directed to communicate his wish so that the emperor might actually announce the favour regarding him (Dal Singh) and my (Dara's) gifts would also continue in his favour in future". "Written on the date 21st of the month of Rajab, 1068 H.' (in April, 1968 A.D.)".

In this way a number of *zamindars of* Bihar joined rebellious princes and participated in their war of succession. Raja Bahroz as mentioned earlier, was on the side of Shuja alongwith the Ujjainia chief; however in the battle fought at Bahadurpur on 14th Feb. 1658, there is hardly any reference of their active participation in the war.[57]

Shah Shuja after being defeated at Bahadurpur fled from the battle field towards Munghyr and fortified the town to defend himself from the pursuing army. In this effort he was greatly helped by Raja Bahroz. In the meantime, Sulaiman Shikoh, who was pursuing Shah Shuja was informed of

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57. Muhammad Kazim, *Alamgirnama*, ed. Khadim Husain and Abdal Hai, Bib. Ind. Calcutta, Vol. I, 1865-73, p. 247.

the defeat of Jaswant Singh, at the hands of Aurangzeb and Murad in the battle of Dharmat (fought on 15th April, 1658) and was asked to reach the capital along with the forces that he had under his command as early as possible. Now the situation had completely changed. Sulaiman Shikoh who had reached Munghyr just about this time decided to make a settlement with Shah Shuja. After a short negotiation Shah Shuja was offered Orissa, Bengal and the territory of Bihar to the east of Munghyr and a treaty was signed to this effect on May 7, 1658.[58] Sulaiman Shikoh immediately marched back towards Agra to help his father Dara Shikoh against Aurangzeb.

In the post-Bahadurpur developments also, none of the *zamindars* including Bahroz are referred to in any of the contemporary accounts. The local sources and even their family accounts are also silent about their rôle in these battles. Bahroz and other *zamindars* closely watched the developments but did not join any prince directly in the war until the final outcome of the succession war. But soon after Dara Shikoh defeat at Samugarh (29 May, 1658), Raja Bahroz decided to change side. In the meantime Aurangzeb dispatched his son Prince Muhammad alongwith Mir Jumla at the head of a large army to Patna to take action against Shah Shuja.[59] Having informed of the march of the army towards Patna, Shah Shuja abandoned Patna and shifted to Munghyr which he had fortified very well with the help of Raja Bahroz in the previous years when he was confronted with the army of Dara Shikoh. Mir Jumla soon after reaching Patna contacted local chiefs to gain their support in his struggle against Shuja. Apparently at this stage *farmans*

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58. *Alamgirnama*, op.cit. pp. 492-97. Aqil Khan, *Waqiat-i-Alamgiri* ed. Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hazi Zaffar Hasan, Delhi, 1945, pp. 123-130.

59. Ibid..

were issued to Raja Bahroz and after his submission, he was asked to gather support from other *zamindars*. Raja Bahroz decided to join Aurangzeb because in his view, Shah Shuja was hardly in a position to win the war against Aurangzeb. He also contacted other local chiefs to support Aurangzeb.[60]

Mir Jumla reached in the vicinity of Munghyr in early March but as the main road was blocked by the enemy and putting the town to siege, appeared to be time consuming in the absence of much needed local support. Raja Bahroz who had already joined Mir Jumla provided them not only much needed information about the topography of the region but also the support of the local people. As a result Shah Shuja was forced to abandon Munger and take shelter at the fort of Raj Mahal.[61]

Raja Bahroz again came to their rescue and with his help the imperial army marched through Kharakpur hills and successfully launched an attack on the rear of Shah Shuja's army. He was forced to flee and take shelter in the Birbhum area which was completely inaccessible for the pursuing army. Bahroz once again came to their help. Being fully acquainted with the topography of the region, Bahroz led the imperial army to Birbhum through the Kharakpur hills and also made arrangements for the regular supply of food and fodder. He also brought the *zamindars* of Birbhum to Aurangzeb's side.[62]

Around 1660, taking advantage of the war of succession specially the campaign against Shah Shuja in which almost all important Mughal officers

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60. T.U. II, p. 57.
61. *Alamgirnama*, pp. 494-95, *Waqiat-i Alamgiri*, op.cit., p. 125.
62. *Alamgirnama*, pp. 496-97.

loyal to Aurangzeb were involved, some of the chiefs of Bihar notably Chero chief of Palamau, rebelled. As the governor of Bihar, Daud Khan was absent from Patna, the rebels expelled the imperial officers and declared their independence. When Aurangzeb was informed of these development he issued an order directing, Daud Khan to immediately proceed to Patna and suppress the rebellion.[63]

On 23rd March, 1661, Daud Khan left Patna, alongwith Raja Bahroz at the head of a large army to punish the Chero chief of Palamau.[64] After capturing the forts of Kuthi, Kunda and Deogan which guarded the chieftaincy, the imperial army proceeded to attack Palamau (the capital city). The Palamau's two forts were very well defended as the entire area was covered with dense forest and rugged hills. There was hardly any proper approach road, consequently the army could not move forward. Besides that the imperialist also had very little information about the region. Raja Bahroz again provided the much needed logistic support to the army and personally supervised clearing of forests. Bahroz and his son Kunwar Tahawwar throughout this long campaign actively participated in planning and fighting the rebels. It would not be incorrect to say that without the cooperation of Bahroz, Palamau would not have been captured so easily.[65]

Although, as discussed above Bahroz played a very important role in the campaign against Shah Shuja and thereafter in bringing chiefs of Bihar under imperial control but surprisingly his services were not given due

63. *Alamgirnama*, pp. 648-49.
64. Ibid.,, p. 650.
65. *Alamgirnama*, op.cit., pp. 648-60. See in details about this campaign in Chapter on *Cheros* of Palamau.

recognition by Emperor Aurangzeb. At the time of his death in 1674-75[66], he was holding a minor rank of 700/700.[67] Besides that he was also not given any administrative office either at the Central Government or in the *suba* administration.

Raja Bahroz left behind four sons Kunwar Tahawwar, Kunwar Hoshang, Kunwar Bahroz and Kunwar Guhrashasp.[68] Raja Kunwar Tahawwar the eldest son succeeded to the throne in 1676.[69] He participated alongwith his father, in the Palamau expedition and was particularly mentioned among the *mansabdars* who were ordered to make the final assault on the fort.[70] His services were again requisitioned during the uprising of the Jaintiya Raja in Sylhet area. The *Akhbarats* mention that Shaisha Khan, the *Nazim* of Bengal received reports that the Jaintiya Raja with 1500 infantry had ravaged the *thanas*, pillaged the villages and besieged the fort of Sylhet, Shaista Khan alongwith Iradat Khan and Tahawwur Asad[71] *zamindar* of Kharakpur, defeated the Raja and brought the area under the imperial control.[72]

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66. K.P. Mitra, op.cit. pp. 52-53, Munshi Mahadev Lal op.cit. However according to *Maasir-ul Umara* and following it, R. Bose in his *Notes on Kharakpur*, J.A.S. B. 1871, p. 24 gives the date of Bahroz's death as 1076 H. (1665-66). This is obviously wrong in view of another inscription of Raja Bahroz discovered by Qeyamuddin Ahmad (no. 130), which is dated 1085 (1674-5). Moreover, the *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Muallah*, also testify that Bahroz was alive till the 9th Julus of Aurangzeb. An entry, dated 19 Rajab, 9th Julus (5th January, 1667) mentions the death of the son of Raja Bahroz *zamindars* of Kharagpur. Thus it appears that Bahroz died some time between 1085 (1674-75), the date of the inscription of his son and successor Raja Kunwar Tahawwur (no. 141). The *Mukhtasar-i-Tawarikh-i-Kharagpur* gives the date of his death as 1084 Fasli (1675) which seems to be nearer the truth (Q. Ahmad, A *Corpus of Arabic and Persian inscriptions of Bihar (A.D. 640-1200)*, K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, pp. 257-58).
67. *Amal-i-Saleh*, III, op.cit., p. 475.
68. M. Martin, op.cit. pp. 239-40, K.P. Mitra, op.cit., pp. 52-53.
69. K.P. Mitra, op.cit., p. 53.
70. *Alamgirnama*, op.cit., pp. 657-58.
71. Raja Kunwar Tahawwur has been mentioned in *Akhbarat* as Tahawur ur Asad.
72. Qayamuddin Ahmad, op.cit., pp. 299-300.

Tahawwur Asad's name also occurs in the *Akhkarats* (of Aurangzeb's reign) in connection with the suppression of Gangaram's rebellion in Bihar during 1682-84.[73] Ganga Ram was as *Amil* of Khan-i-Jahan Zafar Jung, who had sent him to manage his *Jagirs* in Allahabad and Bihar when he went as viceroy to the Deccan in 1680.[74] Owing to the jealousy of the old *Mutasaddis* who unjustly charged him with embezzlement and poisoned the ears of his master against him, he was recalled by Khan-i-Jahan. But he disobeyed him and gathering 4000 horses plundered the town of Bihar Sharif and besieged Patna.[75] Tahawwur Asad under the command of Safi Khan, the Governor of Bihar, played very important role in the suppression of Ganga Ram's rebellion.[76]

In 1714 a *Khilat* was granted to Raja Tahawwur Asad for his services.[77] Thereafter we have no other reference of Tahawwur Asad during the reign of Aurangzeb, although he outlived Aurangzeb and died in 1726.

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73. Qeyamuddin Ahmad, A view of the Provincial Administration of Bihar under Farrukhsiyar, 1712-19, *JBRS*, Vol. 1, Pt. I-IV, June-Dec, 1974, p. 122.
74. J.N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. 5, p. 309, S.H. Askari, op.cit., p. 174.
75. *JBRS*, vol. I, Jan-Dec. 1964, Pt. I-IV, p. 122n.
76. Bhimsen, *Tarikh-i-Dilkusha*, tr. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, edited with notes and introduction, V.G. Khobrekar, Deptt. of Archives, Maharaashtra, Bombay 1972, p. 135.
77. *JBRS*, Vol. I, Prt. I-IV, 1964, Jan.-Dec., p. 122.

Chapter – III

UJJAINIAS OF BHOJPUR

Bhojpur was a *Mahal* in the *Sarkar* Rohtas of Bihar *Suba* during Akbar's reign.[1] Later on when the *sarkar* was divided into two (Rohtas and Shahabad) they held their major portion in the *Sarkar* of Shahabad. During the reign of Jahangir, the *Ujjanias* controlled the part of the *parganas* of Arrah, Bihiya, Danwar, Pero, Punwar, Nanar, Dambara, Barahgaon and Bhojpur in the *sarkar* of Shahabad, parts of the *parganas* of Sahasram and Chainpur in Rohtas and of Kopa and Manjhi in *Sarkar* Saran. Besides these they also eld Garh and Mahmoodabad.[2] Their strong hold were the forts of Shergarh and Jagdishpur[3]. Presently, it is a village situated two miles north of Dumraon in the Buxar subdivision. It has been divided into two Bhojpur namely Bhojpur Qadim (old) and Bhojpur Jadid (New).[4] However, the whole northern part of the erstwhile district of Shahabad is commonly known as Bhojpur and its inhabitants called Bhojpuris.[5]

Shahabad one of the *Sarkar* in the *Suba* of Bihar comprised the south-western portion of the Patna-Division situated between 24°31' and 25°43' north latitude and between 83°23' and 84°55' east longitude[6]. The name Shahabad is probably associated with the memory of Mughal Emperor, Babur who had pitched his camp at Ara in 1529 A.D. after his

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1. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, p. 71.
2. Munshi Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjania* II, pp. 35, 54, 55.
3. *Akbarnama* III, pp. 186-9.
4. *District Census Hand Book of Shahabad*, 1951, p. 176.
5. P.C. Roy Chaudhary, *Shahabad District Gazetteer*, 1966, PP. 1,798.
6. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. XII P. 157.

victory over the Afghans of the Province of Bihar. In order to commemorate this victory Babur named this place as Shahabad or the city of the Emperor.[7]

The Shahabad (Bhojpur) region was under the domination of *Chero* a branch of Rajbhant tribe who ruled earlier over Magadh region and were known as Kikat[8]. However their domination over the Kikat region in general and Bhojpur in particular was challenged by Parmar Rajputs who migrated from Ujjain to Bihar in early 14[th] century.[9]

Different versions have been given about the establishment of Ujjainia's hegemony over Bhojpur, however it is now generally believed that the chiefs of Bhojpur belonged to Ujjain and migrated to this region and established their rule in 1320.[10]

The early history of the chieftaincy is, however, extremely confusing; even the family history and local tradition are at variance about the rulers of the chieftaincy. It is only after the accession of Raja Durlabh Deo that we find a clear picture of Ujjainia Raj. Raja Durlabh Dev who ascended the throne in 1489 had three wives and five sons, namely Badal Singh, Shivram Singh, Sangram Singh, Devendra Singh and Mahipal Singh.[11] The trouble in the

7. P.C.Roy, Chaudhary, op. cit.
8. R.N. Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, (1320-1860 A.D.) Historical Research Series, No. 25, Kashi Prasad Jaiswal Research Institute, Patna 1987. P. 7.
9. The migration of the Parmars of Bhojpur was in the natural process of the general migration of the Rajputs to different places as a result of the Turkish military pressure and the establishment of their rule in the mid Gangetic Doab. (R.N. Prasad, *History of Bhojpur* (1320-1860). P. 7.
10. The establishment of Ujjainia ascendancy over Bhojpur has been given by R.N. Prasad, in his book *History of Bhojpur* see in details, pp. 7-17.
11. Bodhraj of Pugal, *Bhojpur mein Paramarou ka Itihas 1577 Tak* (Ms. in Hindi), KBL, Patna. Bodhraj belonged to Pugal in Bikaner (Rajasthan). He wrote the history of Parmar Rajputs. The author visited Jagdishpur (Bhojpur) in 1663 for the collection of materials and stayed there for six months. This Hindi document is available in Khuda Baksh library, Patna. It is an important original historical record which gives the account of the Ujjainias of Bhojpur tracing back their

family started in 1500 A.D. when Raja Durlabh Deo under the influence of his second wife declared Shivram Singh as his heir apparent and treated Badal Singh, the eldest son with indifference and neglect. The other members of the Durlabh Deo's family including the other two Queens strongly opposed this partial decision. But Badal Singh apparently remained faithful to his father. However he left Bhojpur, went into the forest and raised his own troops to strengthen his position.[12] Bodhraj had given a very detailed account of Badal Singh's life during his wandering in the forest and his meeting with Farid (later, Sher Shah). It is very interesting to note that Badal's problems and Farid's problems were of similar nature. Both of them have to leave their home because of the mechanization of their step mothers. Hence they became very good friend and took a vow to remain faithful to each other and extend all possible help in times of need.[13]

When Farid took the charge of Sahasram and Khawaspur Tanda in 1511, he sent an envoy with gifts to Durlabh Deo and made enquiries about his friend, Badal. He requested Durlabh Deo to send Badal to Sahasaram. Durlabh Deo received the envoy with due honours, and informed him that as he had become quite old he needed the services of Badal for running the

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descent directly to the famous Raja Bhoj of Dhar in Malwa. It abruptly ends after giving the accounts till 1577 B.P. Ambashthaya, "The Accounts of the Ujjainias in Bihar", *JBRS*, Jan-Dec, 1961, Vol. XLVII, Parts I to IV. P. 423).

12. Bodhraj of Pugal, Also, See B.P. Ambashthaya, "*The Accounts of Ujjainias of Bihar*" J.B.R.S. 1961 op cit. However *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* Vol. II, Naval Kishore Publicaton, 1898, which is a history of the Ujjainia Raj in Urdu. It records that Raja Dulha Sahi (Dulha probably a corruption of Durlabh) had two sons, from first wife and they were Badal Sahi and Ram Sahi. The Raja (Dulha Sahi) had three sons from the second wife and they were Sangram Sahi, Devendra Sahi and Dilip Sahi. Raja Durlabh Deo or Dulha Sahi had no third wife and that since Badal was blind, his younger brother Ram Sahi ascended the throne after the death of his father, Raja Dulha Sahi). The account of *Tawarikh Ujjainia* is however, not reliable and trustworthy as its author, namely Binayak Prasad, who was an employee of Maharaja Radha Prasad Singh towards the end of the 19th century, had little sense of history.

13. Bodhraj of Pugal, *Bhojpur main Paramaron Ka Itihas*, op.cit.

administration of his kingdom. Although Farid's own fortunes declined soon because of the renewed rift between him and his father, Badal was able to retrieve his position due to Farid's intervention.[14]

Badal Singh was able to maintain his position at the court of his father till 1518. He had collected a large number of troops personally loyal to him. However after the death of his father in 1519, a war of succession started among his sons in which Badal Singh and Mahipal Singh were killed. Shivram Singh who survived, became the head of the Bhojpur chieftaincy with its capital at Bihta in 1519.[15]

After the death of Badal Singh, his widow alongwith her two minor sons Gajpati and Bairisal passed her life in great distress. However after her sons became 18 and 15 years old the Rani met Sher Khan in 1532 and requested him to help her sons to get back their chieftaincy. Bodhraj tells us that with the army sent by Sher Khan, Gajpati the elder son of Badal Singh defeated and killed Shivram Singh and succeeded to the throne at Jagdishpur in 1534 A.D.[16]

After this very close and cordial relations were established between Gajpati and Sher Khan. Gajpati was so much obliged to him that in the same year 1534 on his call to help him against Mahmud Shah of Bengal he immediately proceeded towards Surajgarh at the head of two thousand horses. In the hotly contested battle, fought at Surajgarh Sher Khan defeated Ibrahim Khan the commander of Sultan Mahmud.[17] Bodhraj adds that Ibrahim Khan

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14. *Bhojpur mein Paramaron Ka Itihas 1577 Tak* (Ms. Hindi).
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. *Bhojpur mein Paramaron Ka Itihas 1577 Tak* (Ms. Hindi)

was killed by Gajpati and all the camp equipments, elephants and artillery pieces of the Bengal army fell into the hands of the Afghans and Ujjainias. Sher Khan was so highly pleased with Gajpati's, valour that as a reward the region of Buxar was also assigned to him[18]. Sher Khan also gave a sword to Bairi Sal, the brother of Gajpati.[19]

In the meantime an unfortunate development took place which created further dissension in the *Ujjainia* family. Mahipal's (the son of the youngest wife of Durlabh Dev and uncle of Gajpati who was murdered in family feud due to succession struggle) widow alongwith her son Dalpat, at this time approached her brother Birbhan of Arail[20] and requested him to help her son in getting back the chieftaincy of *Ujjaianias*. Birbhan who knew fully well that Gajpati had cordial relation with Sher Khan, decided to seek the help of Emperor Humayun.[21] In 1538 when Humayun marched towards Barkhnada (in Palamau district of Bihar) in pursuit of Sher Khan, Birbhan met him on the way and requested him to help his nephew to get back his old position in the *Ujjainia* chieftaincy. It seems that he also apprised him of Gajpati's close relations with Sher Khan, an enemy of the Mughals. Humayun agreed to help him and also provided some retainers. It is believed that with this army Birbhan, succeeded in defeating Gajpati and establishing his nephew Dalpat in Jagdishpur. With the passage of time Dalpat also established his control over Buxar and Bhojpur.[22]

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18. *Bhojpur mein Paramaron Ka Itihas 1577 Tak* (Ms. Hindi)
19. B.P. Ambashthaya, *The Decisive Battles of Sher Shah,* Janaki Prakashan Chowhatta, Patna, 1977 P. 22.
20. Arail was a *Pargana* in the *Suba* of Allahabad.
21. *Bhojpur mein Paramaron Ka Itihas 1577 Tak* (Ms. Hindi).
22. Ibid.

Birbhan felt deeply obliged to Humayun and gave him sincere support in his clash with Sher Khan. When Humayun was defeated in the battle of chausa and was hotly pursued by Mir Farid Gaur, an Afghan commander of Sher Khan, Birbhan personally came to meet the emperor and provided him with all necessary provisions. He helped him in crossing the Ganges near Mirzapur and requested him to proceed to Agra assuring that he would deal with Mir Farid with his own army firmly and decisively. Hence Humayun was able to reach safely to Agra.[23]

Raja Gajpati on the other hand being dispossessed from his estate, joined Sher Khan with a strong contingent of *Ujjainias* soldiers. Though Bodhraj and Munsi Binayak Prasad are silent about his role in the battle of Chausa (1539) but after critically analyzing all the facts connected with the battle one comes to a definite conclusion that Gajpati took a leading part in the battle and contributed substantially in the success of Sher Khan[24]. We find that soon after the victory in the battle of Chausa, Gajpati, apparently with the support of Sher Khan launched an attack on Bhojpur, defeated Dalpat and captured Bhojpur. Sher Khan also conferred on him the title of *Raja* and the *Sarkars* of Rohtas and Shahabad were also assigned to him. Gajpati constructed a fortress at Jagdishpur and made it the capital of his chieftaincy.[25]

During the rule of Sur dynasty, there was complete peace in the Bhojpur region. Gajpati not only consolidated his position as the most powerful

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23. Jauhar Aftabchi, *Tazkirat-ul Waqiat*, (Rotograph in the Library, CAS, Deptt. of History, A.M.U. Aligarh) P.25. Gulkadan Begum's account also corroborates Jauhar's narration. See also Bodhraj of Pugal.
24. B.P. Ambashthaya, *The Decisive Battles of Sher Shah*, op.cit., p. 23.
25. Munsi Binayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow, P. 15.

chief of north-west Bihar but also extended the boundaries of his chieftaincy upto the borders of Jaunpur *Sarkar*.[26]

With the reestablishment of Mughal rule in North India, under Humayun (July 1555) there was a possibility of Gajpati being displaced by Dalpat with whom emperor Humayun had some personal relations. But before Dalpat could contact Humayun, he suddenly died of an accident. Therefore the situation remained unchanged for Gajpati.

After the accession of Akbar, Bairam Khan appointed Ali Quli Khan-i-Zaman to expel Afghan rebels from the eastern region. He achieved some success against the rebels and established his headquarters at Jaunpur,. But while the operations against Afghan were in progress Raja Gajpati who had cordial relation with them also started opposing the Mughal army. According to Badauni "Gajpati whose army and strength was such that for the space of two years, he had kept the Khan-i-Zaman uselessly employed in jungle cutting and even that jungle was not clear as it ought to be."[27]

From the above it appears that Ali Quli Khan-i-Zaman failed in his efforts to subdue Raja Gajpati. In the meantime Bairam Khan was dismissed and those nobles who were opposed to Bairam Khan got an upper hand at the court. As Ali Quli Khan-i-Zaman and his relations were considered very close to Bairam Khan, and they were singled out for harassment. Finding all doors of negotiations closed, Ali Quli Khan-i-Zaman along with his relation and clansmen rebelled. For almost four years (1564-67) the entire resources of the

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26. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama* III, P. 168
27. Badauni, *Muntakhab-ul Tawarikh II,* ed. Ali Ahmad & Lees, Bib. Ind. Calcutta 1864-9, PP. 179-180. Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, ed. B. Day, Bib. Ind. Calcutta, 1913-35, p. 313.

Mughal Empire were pooled together to suppress the rebellion. In 1568 Ali Quli Khan-i-Zaman was killed in the battle of Jhusi and the rebellion came to an end, but it strengthened the power of the Afghans and local chiefs of the eastern region. The military might of the empire which could have been used against Afghans was wasted in suppressing their own nobles. The Afghans utilized this opportunity to further improve their position.

However after the suppression of Uzbek revolt in 1568, Munim Khan was appointed as the governor of Jaunpur. Soon after reaching Jaunpur he started making efforts to bring under imperial control the local chiefs and other recalcitrant elements of the area. Bayazid Bayat writes that during 1568-69, Raja Gajpati submitted before Munim Khan and agreed to pay a sum of Rs. 5 lakhs per annum as *malguzari.*[28] The entry of Raja Gajpati into the imperial service not only extended the Mughal frontiers eastward but also placed the Mughals strategically in an advantageous position in respect of the Afghans of Bihar.[29]

In Feb-March 1573, the Afghans under Lodi Khan rebelled and captured Zamaniya. Lodi Khan also launched an attack on Jaunpur which was the headquarters of the Mughal commander Munim Khan. Munim Khan was taken by surprise by the sudden attack of Afghans. He hastly mobilized the available troops at Jaunpur and sent a detatchment under the command of a number of important nobles such as Mirza Hasan Khan, Jan Muhammad Bihsudi, Tenger Quli including Raja Gajpati to oppose Yusuf Mohd. The

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28. Bayazid Bayat, *Tazkira-i-Humayun wa Akbar*, ed. Hidayat Husain, Bib. Ind. Series, Asiatic Society of Bengal, P. 319.
29. Iqtidar Alam Khan, *A Political Biography of a Mughal Noble, Munim Khan (1497-1575)*, Aligarh, 1973, p. 109.

qarrison of Ghazipur was ordered to cooperate with them. The imperial forces met the Afghans on the left bank of the Ganges and forced them to cross back to the side of Zamania after a brief battle. When the news of Afghan invasion spread, the Mughal officers began to pour into Jaunpur with their contingents. The armies of Tardi Muhammad Mirza, Hasan Khan, Jan Muhammad Bihsudi, Tenger Quli and Raja Gajpati were placed under the command of Nazar Bahadur and were ordered to cross the Ganges at Banaras and harass the enemy by making lightening attacks from the rear.[30] Nazar Bahadur was defeated at the fort of Sirsi near Ghazipur. Munim Khan now collected all the Mughal forces and rushed towards Ghazipur to retrieve the situation.But when he reached there Lodi Khan opened negotiation for peace to which he responded favourably. But his demand were such that no agreement could be reached. Only two alternatives remained before Munim Khan, either to give a battle or retreat from Ghazipur and suspend further operations till Akbar's returns from Gujrat. He was more inclined to the second alternative, but to avoid taking the entire responsibility on himself for such a step, he convened a council of war and placed the issue before the officers. The proposal of a retreat was opposed vigoriously by Raja Gajpati and Bayazid Beg. In the cource of the discussion, when Munim Khan pointedly asked Raja Gajpati to express his opinion on the issue, the Raja exclaimed impatiently; After all will you offer a battle to the Afghans or not? Munim Khan took serious exception to this retort from the Raja and accused Bayazid Beg of insiting him. Bayazid Beg and Raja Gajpati remained firm in their views and argued that postponing the battle would not only create disorder in the army but will encourage Afghan to harass the

30. Bayazid Bayat, op.cit., p. 321.

imperialists. Ultimately it was decided that the Qaqshals would launch a night attack upon the enemy's camp and if they succeeded in creating confusion among the Afghans, a general assault would be delivered.[31] The plan of night attack could not materialize owing to the dubious attitude of the Qaqshals. However Munim Khan came out of the fort of Ghazipur and engaged the Afghan in an open battle. At the same time, the bridge of boats built by the Afghans over the Ganga was destroyed by a dust storm. As a result, Lodi Khan's line of supplies across the Ganga was disrupted and there prevailed an acute scarcity inside the Afghan camp. As the situation in the Mughal camp was also no better, both the parties negotiated a settlement and the Afghan left for Patna.[32]

Munim Khan's efforts however could not make much impact on the strongly entrenched Afghans. As soon as Akbar was free from the Gujrat affairs he advanced towards eastern region at the head of a large army and flotilla of boats in 1574. After a halt at Chausa and Maner, Akbar reached Patna. After having surveyed the fort of Patna, he came to the conclusion that Patna could be captured only after the occupation of Hajipur. Therefore, Raja Gajpati alongwith M. Ali Alam Shahi, Sayyid Shams Bokhari and his sons under the command of Khan Alam were dispatched to launch an attack on Hajipur. The emperor himself personally supervised the entire operations. The imperialists defeated the garrison and Hajipur was captured. Soon afterwards Patna was also captured but Daud Khan taking the advantage of the night, secretly slipped away to Bengal.[33]

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31. Bayazid Bayat, op.cit.,, pp. 326-27.
32. Ibid.
33. *Akbarnama, III,* P. 98, *Tabakat-i-Akbari,* II, P. 291.

Akbar himself returned to Agra after appointing Munim Khan as the governor of Bihar and Raja Todar Mal was appointed as the *diwan* of the *Suba*. Besides that Muzaffar Khan was appointed to capture the fort of Rohtas which was then held by the Karrani Afghans. Soon after, the Mughals defeated the Afghans in different areas and captured places like Surajgarh, Munghyr, Bhgalpur and Kahalgaon which were then the strong holds of the Afghans.

In the same year (1574), Munim Khan dispatched Rampat Ujjainia,[34] son of Raja Gajpati under the command of Raja Todar Mal to suppress the rebellion of Afghan chief Daud Khan in Bengal. The rebels were defeated after a number of skirmishes during October 1574.[35] The services of Rampat Ujjania were also utilized by Munim Khan in Orissa against Daud Khan in 1575.[36] While Munim Khan was busy in his campaign against Daud he was suddenly taken ill and died after a brief illness in the same year.[37]

Akbar dispatched Husain Quli *Khan-i-Jahan* to Bengal as its governor on 15th November 1575, and deputed Raja Todar Mal to assist *Khan-i-Jahan* in this campaign. Some of the Mughal officers of Bengal in the meanwhile had left that province where they had been suffering because of its bad climate and proceeded towards Bihar through Purniya and Tirhut route. This exodus was

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34. The genealogical table of the Ujjainia Rajputs and their descendants who have settled in Shahabad district (Bihar) is available in Khuda Baksh Library, but it does not give the name of Rampat Ujjainia. It however gives one Ram Singh, the son of Gajpati, in Hindi MS in Khuda Baksh Library known as *Ram Das Kachchawahas Ki Varta*, shows Rampat Ujjainia to be the son of Gajpati Ujjainia of Bhojpur in Shahabad district and who accompanied Kishan Singh to Patna in the fight against Daud. Hence Kunwar Rampat Ujjania is no other than Ram Singh or Sri Ram the son of Raja Gajpati, as found in genealogical table (B.P. Ambashthaya, "The Accounts of Safdar Ali, the Mir Munsi of Todar Mal and Ram Das Kachchawahas by Kanha Bard of Kachchawahas of the village Achalpurah in Jaipur State", *JBRS*, XLIV, Pt. I & II, March-June, 1958, p. 68).
35. B.P. Ambashthaya, *The Accounts of Safdar Ali*, op. cit.
36. *Akbarnama* III.P. 121. T.A. II, 304, *Muntakhab-ul Tawarikh*, II, p. 193.
37. *Akbarnama* III, P. 160.

stopped at Bhagalpur through the efforts of *Khan-i-Jahan,* who took up his residence at Rajmahal as the rains had set in.

In the meantime, Muzaffar Khan, who had been directed by the emperor to re-inforce Khan-i-Jahan, with the forces from Bihar, he joined him at Rajmahal. After holding consultations, they decided to attack the enemy immediately. In the hotly contested battle fought at Rajmahal (12th July 1576), Afghans were completely defeated. Junaid was killed in the fight and Kalapahar was severely wounded.[38] Daud Khan was arrested and beheaded. The Afghan rule thus came to an end once for all.

During the absence of Muzaffar Khan from Bihar, and probably one or two months before the battle of Rajmahal, Raja Gajpati, unfurled the banner of rebellion against the imperial authority (1576)[39] . Saeed Khan Chagta who was officiating as the governor of Bihar during the absence of Muzaffar Khan, was ordered to immediately proceed along with Makhus Khan and other officers of Bihar to the assistance of Shahbaz Khan Kamboh who was specially deputed to put down the revolt of Raja Gajpati.[40]

Although Raja Gajpati had submitted and joined Mughal service and also cooperated with Munim Khan in dealing with Afghan rebels as mentioned above, but it seems that *Ujjainias* could not be fully integrated in the Mughal political structure. He was neither given a rank nor any administrative responsibility by the imperial administration. It is also important to note that

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38. *Akbarnama* III, pp. 179-81.
39. Abul Fazl writes that "Due to his inverted fate and evil nature...this ill conditioned mischief monger took to the highway robbery and began to oppress the weak more than before. (*Akbarnama* III. P. 169).
40. Nizamuddin Ahmad says that Gajpati rebelled when Muzaffar Khan went with re-inforcement to *Khan-i-Jahan* "leaving Bihar void of troops". T.A. II. P. 334).

Raja Gajpati was shown no special favour by the emperor who had come to Bihar to suppress the Afghan rebellion in 1573-74 and possibly met him during the campaign.

Raja Gajpati arrested Peshrau Khan, who was sent by the imperialist to negotiate with him, and besieged Arrah where Farhat Khan had taken shelter.[41] Farhang Khan, the son of Farhat Khan whose *Jagir* lay to the east of river Sone, with a view to releave his besieged father, advanced towards Arrah alongwith Qarataq Khan. But both of them were killed in hand to hand fight with Gajpati. This stirred up Farhang's father to come out of the fort but he also shared the same fate.[42] Gajpati took hold of the town of Arrah and its fort and being emboldened with the victory, he crossed the Ganga and rushed towards Ghazipur to capture the family-members of Khan-i-Jahan.[43] Meanwhile Shahbaz Khan Kambo who was also marching towards Ghazipur, overtook him near the town and a battle was fought in which Gajpati was defeated and put to flight. Pursuing him, the imperialists reached the fort of Moheda[44] which was held by a local chief, named Sangram. Under the pressure of imperial army the Raja surrendered the fort to Shahbaz Khan.[45] Gajpati however escaped and took shelter in the dense forests of Bhojpur. The area was almost inassessable for the Mughal cavalry. Inspite of his best effort Shahbaz Khan failed to reach Gajpati's headquarters. At this juncture Sangrams the local *zamindar* who had recently joined imperial service came to his help. On his direction the Mughals

41. *Akbarnama* III. P. 169.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., pp. 169-70.
44. The Survey map shows Moheda about 7 miles west of Bhojpur.
45. *Akbarnama* III, pp. 185-86.

attacked Dawa,[46] which was the home of Gajpati and put it to pillage and plunder. Gajpati immediately rushed toward Dawa and to save the town made a night attack on the Mughal army. But he was defeated and forced to flee. He took shelter in Jagdishpur which was situated around a thick forest. Shahbaz Khan dispatched a strong army and Jagdishpur was put to siege. The siege operation continued for about three months and ultimately Gajpati was defeated. Although the fort and several of his family members, huge amount of money and the entire chieftaincy came into the hands of the imperial authority but Gajpati along with his brother Bairisal and son Sri Ram (Rampat Ujjainia) managed to escape.[47]

Bairisal along with Sri Ram took shelter in neighbouring hilly forest and defied imperial authority for some time. But the Mughals made a surprise attack and defeated and killed Bairisal.[48] Almost at the same time Gajpati was also killed and the career of a powerful territorial chief came to end in an uneventful manner.

From the above discussion one may conclude that the Mughal imperial administration so far, had no clear cut policy towards the *zamindars* of Bihar. We have seen that even after Gajpati accepted the subordination of Mughals and agreed to pay *malguzari* of 5 lakh of rupees, he was neither admitted in imperial service nor given any official position in Bihar administration. Apparently the Mughal officers posted in Bihar were given complete freedom to deal with them depending on the local conditions.

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46. *Akbarnama* III, pp. 185-86.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., pp. 188-89.

Gajpati and his son Sri Ram continued to cooperate with Mughal administration until Munim Khan was incharge of the affairs of Bihar. During Muzaffar Khan's tenure also, he remained loyal to the Mughals. But after the arrival of *Khan-i-Jahan,* Gajpati's attitude completely changed. He declared his independence and attacked imperial officials posted at Arrah.

The sources are completely silent about the causes of his revolt but by a closer examination of *Akbarnama* it appears that Raja Gajpati was extremely unhappy with the attitude of *Khan-i-Jahan* and we find that in the course of rebellion he directed his all energies in capturing the family and belongings of *Khan-i-Jahan*. Besides that Gajpati may also have noticed that under *Khan-i-Jahan* the Mughal resistance has grown weak and it would be possible for him to recover his territories from the imperial control.

However his son Sri Ram escaped and took shelter in the strong fortress of Shergarh. Hotly pursuing the rebels Shahbaz Khan reached Rohtas and captured it after a siege of few days. The fort was held by Sayyid Mohammad on behalf of deceased Junaid, an old ally of Gajpati. His position had become very weak after Junaid's killing because a number of his supporters joined Mughals. However with the capture of the fort of Rohtas, the position of Sri Ram who was hiding in Shergarh became vulnerable. He immediately approached Shahbaz Khan, offered his submission and handed over the keys of the fort.[49] Thereafter we have no information about Sri Ram in our records.

49. *Akbarnama*, III, pp. 188-89.

After the rebellion and killing of Gajpati and his son Bairisal, Dalpat son of Mahipat, uncle of Gajpati laid claim to the chieftaincy of the *Ujjainias*. Although Sri Ram the eldest son of Gajpati was the rightful heir of the *Ujjainia* chieftaincy, his claims were disregarded on account of the rebellion of his father and his own conduct and Dalpat was recognized as the ruler of Bhojpur by Emperor Akbar. Dalpat remained loyal to the Mughals only for about four years and in 1580, he also raised the banner of revolt against imperial authority. The reasons of his rebellion have not been discussed in any of the contemporary persian records or family accounts. But it seems that Dalpat nursed grievance against Mughal imperial authority for neglecting his claims for the Bhojpur throne and giving undue favour to Gajpati, who had been a favourite of Sher Shah and had fought against Humayun in the battle of Chausa. After restoration of Mughal rule he expected that Gajpati would be removed and the chieftaincy would be restored to him for the help that his maternal uncle provided to Humayun during his flight after his defeat at Chausa. But that had not happened and Gajpati was not only recognized as the chief of Bhojpur but was also admitted in imperial service.

Therefore he availed the opportunity and succeeded to the throne of Bhojpur but he was not happy with the Mughal administration. In 1580 when the rebellion in Bihar and Bengal broke out, Dalpat also joined the rebels and established close contact with the rebel leader Arab Bahadur. To strengthen his position, he shifted his capital from Bihta-Danwar to a safer place called Bahuara in Piru in Ara subdivision and built a strong fort at Dalpatgarh.[50] As mentioned above, around 1580 Afghans rebelled under the command of Arab

50. *Tawarikh-i Ujjainia*, II, op. cit., p. 17.

Bahadur attacked Patna and put to siege the fort of the town.[51] As the situation became extremely serious, the Emperor appointed Mirza Aziz Koka as the governor of the *suba* to suppress the rebels and retrieve the situation.[52] Mirza Aziz Koka proceeded towards Patna but after crossing Chausa, he was informed of the rebellion of Dalpat Ujjainia.[53] Those officers who were posted in the area further informed him that Dalpat had become quite powerful and it would be extremely dangerous to move forward without suppressing him. Aziz Koka accepted their advise and started making determined efforts to quell the rebellion. Arab Bahadur now realized that he will not succeed in capturing the fort early raised the siege and fled to Bhojpur. On reaching there Dalpat not only gave him shelter but also assured him complete cooperation in his struggle against the Mughals.[54]

In the meantime Shahbaz Khan Kambo who was specially deputed by the emperor to assist Mirza Aziz Koka also reached Bihar. Now both the commanders launched an attack on Jagdishpur. The town was plundered but Dalpat and Arab Bahadur escaped in the Jungles and continued their struggle. As the area was full of defiles and dense forests, the Mughal army could not force them into an open battle. On the other hand the rebels adopted guerrilla tactics and harassed and killed Mughal soldiers in large numbers.[55] But shortly afterwards serious differences arose between Aziz Koka and Shahbaz Khan and ultimately Aziz Koka withdrew himself from the campaign and went to join

51. A.N. III, p. 323.
52. Ibid.
53. T.A., p. 347.
54. A.N. , III, p. 323.
55. Ibid.

Raja Todar Mal[56]. However Shahbaz Khan continued his campaign; ordered clearing of the jungles and stationed troops on important routes. The fort of Kant[57] was assigned to Saadat Ali Khan and Payenda Khan. Rustam and Rup Narayan a local chief were also called upon to assist him. But before Sadat Ali Khan was able to strengthen his position Arab Bahadur and Dalpat made a surprise attack on Kant and killed him after a bitter fight.[58] As soon as Shahbaz Khan came to know of this attack, he swiftly moved towards that direction and drove them towards Sahasram. After Arab Bahadur's defeat and flight, Dalpat was also forced to accept the submission of imperial authority[59]. However from Sahasram, Arab Bahadur moved to Saran and began to plunder and harass the people of the area. Shaham Khan and other nobles were sent to punish Arab Bahadur. But before serious military operation could start, Arab Bahadur fled to Jaunpur and joined rebel Masum Khan Farankhudi.[60]

Dalpat Ujjainia after remaining under the subordination of the imperial authority for about eight years, rebelled again in 1599. Abul Fazl writes that he had become rebellious on account of the strength of his place and of his abundant equipment. Abul Fazl simply informs us that prince Daniyal who had been appointed as governor of Allahabad, was ordered to check Raja Dalpat Ujjainia who had become defiant in his attitude. He further adds that when Danial reached Hajipur, Raja Dalpat Ujjainia came and submitted before the prince and presented elephants.[61] But soon after out of 'smallness of wisdom he

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56. A.N. , III, p. 323.
57. An Important place nine miles from the Sone and now in Mirzapur District in U.P. but then a dependency of Rohtas in Bihar. See *Tarikh of Banaras*.
58. A.N., III, p. 324.
59. Ibid.
60. A.N., III, p. 325.
61. Ibid., p. 750

fled from the court and rebelled. However within a short time he was captured and brought back to the court'.[62] He was pardoned and allowed to go to his home. From a reference in *Akbarnama* it appears that a daughter of Dalpat was married to Prince Danial and in 1604 a son was born to her and Akbar named him Farhang Hushang.[63] When Dalpat was on his way to Patna, Barkhurdar, the son of Abdur Rahman and some of his friends who had gone out from Agra to hunt, came to know that the Ujjainia chief was having his food on the river bank. Barkhurdar decided to attack and kill Dalpat because his father had been killed by Dalpat in a battle fought some time back. But Dalpat escaped by swimming across the river.[64] When this matter was reported to the Emperor he became very angry with Barkhurdar, got him arrested and decided to hand him over to Dalpat Ujjainia. However on the request of some senior nobels he was pardoned and released.[65] However Dalpat was not destined to live long and was treacherously murdered by his own kinsmen in 1601.[66]

Dalpat was succeeded by his son Mukutmani in 1601.[67] He was incompetent, and highly unpopular amongst his kinsmen. Within six years of his rule Mukutmani became so unpopular that he was forced by his own kinsmen to abdicate in favour of his nephew, Narayan Mal (son of Hol Singh) in 1607 A.D.[68] Munsi Binayak Prasad writes that after succession, Raja

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62. A.N, III, p. 323.
63. Ibid., p. 826.
64. Ibid., p. 758.
65. *A.N.*, III, p. 578.
66. *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* II, p. 26.
67. Geneological table of the Ujjainias given in T.U.
68. *T.U.* II., p. 21. However, *Baharistan-i Ghaybi* informs us that Raja Narayan Mal was the son of Raja Bhatmal Bishan (p. 722).

Narayan Mal went to Agra and remained there for some times in the service of Khurram.[69]

Although Narayan Mal had succeeded to the throne of Jagdishpur with the support of his kinsmen but his claim was weak because Sangram Singh, the son of Bairisal (brother of Gajpati) was a much more stronger claimant of Jagdishpur throne. He therefore decided to visit Agra to plead to the imperial authority to recognize him as the rightful ruler of the Ujjainia Raj. *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* informs us that in Agra, he succeeded in entering the service of Khurram and gradually gained his favour. However before he could find favour of the Emperor, *Cheros*, taking advantage of his absence from Bhojpur unfurled the banner of revolt against the *Ujjainias*. Therefore Narayan Mal immediately returned to Jagdishpur to suppress them.[70]

The *Cheros* nursed a serious grievance against them since the *Ujjainia* had deprived them of their suzerainty over the land of Kikat which included Bhojpur and forced them to go towards Palamau. They were also unhappy with the Mughals because the latter had given support to the *Ujjainias* in driving them not only out of Bhojpur but also out of the fort of Rohtas which had become their stronghold ever since they were expelled from Bhojpur. Hence it can be said that the uprising of 1607 was partly directed against Ujjainias and partly against the Mughal government in Bihar.[71] The prevailing political situation of *Sarkar* Shahabad was quite favourable for the rebels. Narayan Mal, the chief of Bhojpur was at Agra on a political mission and those who remained

69. *Tawarikh-i- Ujjainia*, Vol II, pp. 21-28.
70. Ibid.,
71. After their expulsion from west Bihar, *Cheros* often rose in rebellion to give vent to their anger and also recover their territories but their revolt was always suppressed.

in Bhojpur were fighting among themselves for establishing their hold over the chieftaincy.[72] Besides that Afzal Khan, son of Abul Fazl, who had recently joined as governor of the *suba* was not able to establish his grip over the administration of the province firmly.

The *Cheros* were led by Siya Ram Rai, a prominent *Chero* chief. He was actively assisted by a band of *Chero* leaders such as Sonpari *Chero*, Raja of Kaddhar.[73] Rajas of Anandichak and Balaunja, Raja Madhava Munda and Charran Chaap, son of Raja of Lohardaga and son-in-law of Kaddhar,[74] The Mughal administration took *Chero* uprising quite seriously. Narayan Mal, as mentioned above, immediately proceeded towards Bhojpur and soon after reaching there launched an offensive against the rebels. Having come to know of the rebellion of the *Cheros* Emperor Jahangir also ordered Rai Kalyan Singh to immediately proceed towards Bhojpur to help Narayan Mal to suppress the rebellion.[75]

In the mean time the *Chero*s established themselves in Buxar and from there started harassing the *Ujjainias*. Narayan Mal with his contingent attacked Buxar to expel them. A fierce battle was fought and the *Chero*s were completely defeated and were on the point of fleeing when Madha Mundra (Madhav Munda) with a large contingent of Munda Soldiers came to their rescue.[76] The *Cheros* now reassembled themselves and with the support of the

72. The successors of Gajpati who considered themselves as lawful heirs were looking for an opportunity to rise in rebellion against the Bhojpur chief. Another claimant to the throne, Sangram Singh Ujjainia, son of Bairisal, also contemplated rebellion. (*Shahabad District Gazetteer*, (1966) P. 72.

73. Kaddhar is a village in the district of Nawada in Bihar.

74. T.U. II. PP. 28-29.

75. Kalyan Singh was the founder of Kayastha family of Murar in the district of Bhojpur. He was the son of Bhog Chandra, *Diwan-i-Khalsa* of Akbar's time.

76. T.U. II. 28-29.

contingent of Munda soldiers relaunched an attack on the *Ujjainias*. The Ujjainia lost heart and when they were just about to leave the battle ground, Kalyan Singh who was watching the battle from a distance joined the *Ujjainias* with 500 Mughal horsemen, and a fierce battle restarted. Suddenly a rumour spread of the arrival of another contingent of Mughal soldiers. This completely demoralized the *Cheros* and they fled from the battlefield. The *Ujjainias* achieved complete victory over the *Cheros*. Harath Pal the Raja of Lohardaga and Raja Madhav Munda were killed alongwith a number of *Cheros*.[77] After the end of the rebellion, Narayan Mal was conferred the title of '*Raja*' and a *mansab* of 1000 *zat* and 800 *sawar* was also granted to him.[78]

Raja Narayan Mal also suppressed the rebellion of Dhar shahi[79] (Dhar Singh) a local *zamindar*, with the help of Mukund Rai. Raja Narayan Mal also helped Afzal Khan the governor of the *suba* in suppressing the rebellion of Qutb of Uch (Multan) who pretended himself as Prince Khusrau and claimed that he had escaped from prison.[80] Raja Madhukar[81] who had joined Qutub was killed in the battle in 1611.[82]

We hardly get any reference of Narayan Mal's activities in the next 11 years. Possibly he remained at Bhojpur without any important duty being assigned to him. In 1622 Khurram rebelled but after suffering successive defeats and hotly chased by Pervez and Mahabat Khan, he came over to Orissa

77. T.U. II, pp. 28-31.
78. T.U. II, p. 34.
79. An Ujjainia rebel and a descendant of Raja Durlabh Rai.
80. Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghyabi* tr. M.I. Borah, Guwahati, pp. 89-91.
81. According to Geneological table given by Bodhraj of Pugal, he was son of Mukutmani, son of Raja Dalpat *Ujjainia.*
82. *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* pp. 89-91. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, pp. 83-84. *Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangiri*, pp. 45-47, *Maasir-i-Jahangiri*, pp. 129-131. Although only *Baharistan-i Ghaybi* mentions the name of Raja Madhukar.

and occupied Cuttack. Shortly afterwards he entered into Bengal and captured Burdwan and Rajmahal and killed Ibrahim Khan, the governor of Bengal. Thereafter he marched towards Bihar and captured Patna and Hajipur easily. From Hajipur he proceeded to Bihiya, where he was joined by Raja Narayan Mal with his followers. Raja Narayan Mal was given the rank of 5000 and his brother Rudra Pratap was raised to the rank of 3000. Other brothers were also given the *mansabs* of 2000/1000. Sometimes in 1624 Raja Narayan Mal died.[83] He ruled for about seventeen years (1607-24). He extended the boundaries of his kingdom over *parganas* of Arrah, Bihiya, Danwar, Pero Punwar, Nanar, Dambara, Barahgaon and Bhojpur in the *sarkar* of Shahabad, parts of *parganas* of Sahasram and Chainpur in Rohtas, and of Kopa and Manjhi in *sarkar* saran. Besides these areas, he also held Gadh and Mahmoodabad.[84] One remarkable feature of his rule was that unlike his predecessors he never rebelled against the Mughals and therefore, his capital was never invaded or plundered by the Mughal soldiers. He extended all possible help to the Mughal governor of Bihar in suppressing the revolt of the local *zamindars*. Further, he freed Bhojpur from the *Cheros* by inflicting a crushing defeat on them and his services were greatly appreciated by the Mughals.

Pratap Singh, the younger brother of Narayan Mal[85] succeeded to the throne of Bhojpur instead of his minor son, Amar Singh. But it is quite significant to note that on this issue there was hardly any difference of opinion

83. *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, op.cit., p. 722. However Munsi Binayak Prasad informs us that Raja Narayan Mal became victim of the internal discussion and was killed by one of his kinsmen in 1621.

84. T.U. II, p. 35. All region except Chainpur are given as *Parganas of Rohtas in Ain*, pp. 22-23, Kopa in Saran, Gadh and Mahmodabad were not identified (Ahmad R. Khan, *Suba* of Bihar under the Mughals 1582-1707) unpublished thesis, Algiarh 1985, p. 176).

85. Narayan Mal had two sons, Amar Singh and Prabal Singh (T.U. II, p. 55)

in the *Ujjainia* ruling family or important *Ujjainia* nobles. Raja Pratap with the support of the family, consolidated his position and effectively governed the chieftaincy.

Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia informs us that emperor Jahangir conferred on him the title of 'Raja' and a *mansab* of 1000/800. He further writes that Raja Pratap shifted his capital from Jgadishpur to old Bhojpur where he built an imposing palace called '*Navratna*'.[86]

In recognition of his past services Shahjahan after ascending the throne assigned him the rank of 1500/1000 and recognized him as the Raja of Bhojpur.[87] He also granted him *jagir* in *sarkar* Shahabad. From *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia,* it appears that he remained posted at Agra for sometimes.[88]

Shahnawaz Khan the author of *Maasir-ul-Umara* writes that Raja Pratap returned to his chieftaincy after about a decade. But soon after his arrival, his relation with the *suba* administration started straining. He was accused of inefficiency and exploitation of his peasantry by the officials of the *suba* administration. Some of his relation particularly officials of his deceased brother Raja Narayan Mal and the Qanungo family of Bakhra Kayasthas who had good relations with *suba* administration exploited the situation in creating further hostilities. Several *parwanas* issued by the governor of the *suba* were also ignored by him. In the meantime it was discovered that he had not paid revenue for the last nine years. Therefore an imperial order was issued ordering him to immediately pay up the entire amount due on him. He was further asked

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86. T.U. II, pp. 43-44.
87. Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshahnama*, vol. I, Pt. II, p. 221. Muhammad Saleh Kamboh, *Amal-i-Saleh*, p. 462.
88. R.N. Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, op.cit., p. 57.

to present himself before the emperor to explain his conduct for other lapses. *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* writes that in response to the *farman* he decided to go to the imperial capital and even went up to Ayodhya, but after reaching there he changed his mind and rose in revolt[89].

As soon as Shahjahan came to know of the rebellion of Pratap he issued an order to Abdullah Khan Firoz Jung and Baqar Khan Najm Sani, governor of Bihar and Allahabad respectively to march simultaneously against the rebel. Fidai Khan, the *Jagirdar* of Gorakhpur and Mukhtar Khan, the *faujdar* of Munghyr were also ordered to march on Bhojpur.[90] Although Raja Pratap was no match to the combined armies of the Governors of Allahabad and Bihar, but offered stiff resistance. Muzaffar Khan and Fariddun Beg the two sons of Zabardast Khan succeeded in making a breach in the wall of the garden surrounding it.

After conquering the fort of Tribaq, Kalur and ten other smaller forts, the imperialist laid siege to the main fort of Bhojpur. The siege operation continued for six month but the *Ujjainia* Raja continued to resist and killed Fariddun Beg and Muzaffar Khan. But the situation inside the fort became critical because of shortage of provisions. In desperation, the Raja made an attempt to escape but could not succeed. But as no resistance was possible any more sent his men to Abdullah Khan Firoz Jang and sued for piece.[91] According to one account he disguised himself in a loin cloth and holding the hand of his wife, he directly approached Abdullah Khan to negotiate a

89. T.U. II, p. 44.

90. *Badshahnama*, vol. I, Pt. II, pp. 272-73. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahanama*, Tr. A.R. Fuller, edited and completed by W.E. Begley and Z.A. Desai, OUP, new Delhi, 1990, pp. 209-210.

91. Ibid.

settlement.[92] But on the way he was arrested and brought before the Khan. Abdullah Khan immediately dispatched a reports to the emperor detailing the suppression of the rebellion, conquest of Bhojpur, arrest of Pratap and his wife alongwith the list of elephants treasures and other valuables captured during the campaign. The emperor after going through the report ordered execution of Pratap.[93] The Raja was taken to Patna and probably executed at the western gate of the city.

After the execution of the Raja, the chieftaincy was brought under *Khalsa* and Nemat Khan son of Sayyid Khan, was deputed to look after the affairs of Bhojpur. Sometimes after the appointment of Nemat Khan as incharge of Bhojpur as mentioned above, the eldest son of Raja Narayan Mal, Aman Singh approached governor of Bihar to recommend his candidature for the chieftaincy of Bhojpur, since Raja Pratap had died without any male heir. But the governor of Bihar was so much annoyed with the *Ujjainias* on account of their recalcitrant and rebellious nature that he refused to recommend the restoration of the Bhojpur throne even to their rightful heir. He did not listen to the entreaties of Amar Singh and the estate of Bhojpur continued to remain under governor's control. However the unsympathetic attitude of the governor of Bihar did not dishearten Amar singh; he continued his efforts and ultimately succeeded in getting back the possession of the Bhojpur estate with the help of the Shah Shuja, the then governor of Bengal in 1648 A.D. after a lapse of nearly twelve years, through a *Nishan* of Shah Shuja. Later on emperor Shahjahan conferred on him the title of 'Raja' and a mansab of 1000/800 was

92 . *Badshahnama*, op.cit., p. 274. Also see *Shahjahanama*, p. 210.
93 . *Badshahnama* vol. I, p. 273. *Shahjahannama*, op.cit., p. 211.

also assigned.[94] Amar Singh shifted his capital from old Bhojpur to Mithila[95] because it was associated with the happy memory of his childhood.[96]

***Ujjainias* and the War of Succession**

On Sept. 6, 1657 Shahjahan suddenly fell ill. With the illness of Shahjahan started the war of succession among his four sons for the imperial throne. On hearing the news of illness of Shahjahan, Murad crowned himself at Ahmadabad and Shah Shuja proclaimed himself as a emperor in Bengal. Dara Shikoh, the eldest son who had been conferred the title of *Shah-i-Buland Iqbal* (the king of lofty fortune) by his father, enjoyed the *mansab* of 60,000. He carried on the government of the empire in the name of his father. Aurangzeb the craftiest and the ablest of all, did not do any such thing. He simply completed his preparations to try his luck in the ensuing war of succession. With his excellent part of artillery and accompanied by Mir Jumla, he set out from Burhanpur towards Agra in March 1658.

Bhojpur figured prominently in the war of succession among the four sons of Shahjahan. Eastern provinces formed one of the zones of the fratricidal war. This region was dominated by Shah Shuja. The prince also started for Agra with a large army to try his luck. Dara Shikoh sent his eldest's son Sulaiman Shikoh with 20,000 Mughal forces, accompanied by Raja Jai Singh of Amber, to face his uncle, Shah Shuja. The *Ujjainia* Rajputs of Bhojpur were brave fighters and their support was considered valuable for gaining victory in the eastern zone of the fratricidal struggle. Hence, both Dara Shikoh and Shah

94. Persian papers of Dumraon Raj.
95. Mithila is a village 20 km southwest of Dumraon in Buxar subdivision of Bhojpur.
96. T.U. II, pp. 57-59.

Shuja tried to win over the support of Amar Singh, chief of Bhojpur, to their side.

In one of his *Nishans* Shah Shuja directed Amar Singh to join his camp. The *Nishan* runs as follows:

> "The best of the peers and contemporaries, worthy of receiving favours and privileges, Amar Singh, being duly honoured with royal gifts may know that in the present time the fact of having up right faith and true intentions of the one (Amar Singh) accustomed to bravery, deserving of favours, privileges, gifts and kindness, has been brought to the notice of the enlightened and the holiest (Shah Shuja) by Raja Bahroz who is noted for his bravery and valour. Therefore this order of high magnitude and conspicuous greatness received the honour of being issued and dispatched to the effect that immediately on receipt of this high auspicious and prosperous *Nishan* you (Amar Singh), being contended in every way, should come to the service of the wholly fortunate with as many men as you can afford to collect so that after viewing the threshold you shall be rewarded with royal bounties and special favours. Take this as urgent".[97]

A similar *Nishan* was sent by Dara Shikoh to Amar Singh in which the latter was asked to render all assistance to Prince Sulaiman Shikoh in his fight against his uncle, Shah Shuja. The *Nishan* is dated 26th January, 1658 A.D. The *Nishan* runs as follows:

> "The prop and pillar among his likes and contemporaries worthy of favours, Amar Singh *Ujjainia*, being duly rewarded with royal favours may know that whereas Prince Sulaiman Shikoh, the progeny of the rulers and victors, the sum and substance of the family greatness, the mandate of the Sultanat.... Therefore this order of high magnitude received the honour being issued to the

97. B.P. Ambasthya, "Some Historical Papers of Dumraon Raj", *PIHC* 1959, Bombay Session, p. 272.

> effect that the pillar among the equals (Amar Singh) shall immediately on receipt of this high *Nishan* proceed successfully alongwith his brothers and followers to the service of the fortunate and noble prince (Sulaiman Shikoh) and shall render excessively loyal and faithful services and shall rest assured that the services rendered by the best among the equals (Amar Singh) shall be amply rewarded by imperial favours and grace. His rank shall of course be raised. Take this as urgent and know that the favours of the emperor shall be with you".[98]

Raja Amar Singh's attitude was a foregone conclusion. While the Bhojpur estate was under the possession of the governor of *suba* Bihar, Amar Singh had got the help of Shah Shuja in securing the possession of Bhojpur estate. Naturally he was under the deep debt of obligation to the prince. It was natural that when request for help came from Shah Shuja, the Bhojpur chief rallied to his support in preference to that of Dara Shikoh.

When prince Sulaiman Shikoh found that Amar Singh had joined the side of his uncle, he turned to Koklat Ujjania[99] a rival of Amar Singh and a claimant of the chieftancy of Bhojpur who immediately agreed to support the prince. Sulaiman's action was approved by his father, Dara Shikoh and the prince issued a *Nishan* to Koklat which was handed over to him through Mirza Raja Jai Singh. The *Nishan* runs as follows :

> "Mirza Raja Jai Singh may know that his Majesty, the holder of the caliphate and the Soloman of the time, had according to my request, raised the *mansab* of Koklat *Ujjainia* to 1000 *Zat* and 800 *Sawar* and bestowed upon him the *jagirs* in *Pargana* Piru and Danwar and in this respect the *Nishan* in favour of Koklat has been sent to pillar of the state (Mirza Raja Jai Singh) so that he may

98. B.P. Ambasthya, op.cit., pp. 273-74.

99. Koklat was the son of Hardat Shah and a great grandson of Chilbar Shah, a younger son of Sangram. He had been recognized as the chief of Bhojpur by Dara (*District Gazetteer of Shahabad*, 1966, p. 75).

> issue a *farman* by his own hands to further assure him".[100]

The forces of Shah Shuja and those of Sulaiman Shikoh had taken up their position near Bahadurpur (near Varanasi). Shah Shuja's forces were stationed in the midst of a dense forest. It was difficult for the soldiers of Sulaiman Shikoh to enter into the forest and attack Shah Shuja's forces. Hence. Sulaiman's army stood helpless. When Dara Shikoh came to know of it, he at once dispatched instructions to Mirza Raja Jai Singh, through a letter written on behalf of emperor Shah Jahan. It is dated February, 1658 A.D. The letter was written on the very day when the battle of Bahadurpur took place. The *Nishan* contained the following instructions:

> "How long will it continue like this? What plan you have made to destroy the enemy? If you have not decided upon anything, make it clear to me so that from this place I may suggest some plan and send instructions as to what should be done? At present you should request Gokul Chand *Ujjainia* (Koklat *Ujjainia*), the *zamindar* of that place to send the footmen and soldiers in all directions and close the roads of grain supplies to the enemy, and a similar force should be sent over to Banaras side, for carrying on an irregular fight and closing the enemy's roads for the supply of foodstuffs. It is very likely that the enemy, sick of trenches, may come out and decide to fight or fly".[101]

On 14th of Feb. 1658, the armies of Shah Shuja and Sulaiman Shikoh clashed with each other. Shah Shuja was helped by Amar Singh *Ujjainia* and

100. The *Nishan* is dated 21st *Rabi-us-Sani* 1068 A.H. corresponding to 16 January, 1958 A.D. Here is some confusion. The *Nishan* addressed to Amar Singh from Dara is dated 26th January, 1658 whereas *Nishan* to Jai Singh is dated 16th January, 1958. The *Nishan* to Amar Singh from Shah Shuja was issued sometime in the end of 1657. It appears that Sulaiman who had already proceeded to Eastern Provinces had come to know about Amar Singh joining the side of Shah Shuja. Hence, he entered into alliance with Kokalat which was approved by Dara Shikoh in his *Nishan* dated 16th Jan, 1958. The *Nishan* to Amar Singh by Dara Shikoh seems to be a diplomatic move to wear away Amar Singh from the side of Shah Shuja.

101. Jaipur Records, *Sarkar* Collection, Vol. I, PP. 5-7.

Sulaiman Shikoh was backed by Koklat *Ujjainia* (Gokul Chand *Ujjainia*). The battle took place at Bahadurpur near Varanasi. Sulaiman Shikoh inflicted a crushing defeat on Shah Shuja. Shah Shuja fled towards Bengal and was hotly pursued by his victorious nephew. In a *Nishan* issued by Dara Shikoh, Sulaiman Shikoh was ordered to pursue the enemy (Shah Shuja) and to besiege the fort of Munger if he had taken shelter there. He was further asked that if the rebel (Shah Shuja) had fled to Rajmahal, the siege of Munger be continued, but some forces should be dispatched in his pursuit.[102]

However Sulaiman Shikoh had to give up his campaign against Shah Shuja because Dara Shikoh had urgently summoned him to Agra to help him in his war against the combined forces of Aurangzeb and Murad. Compelled by the circumstances he concluded peace with Shah Shuja and proceeded towards Agra. Therefore for sometime, Shah Shuja was left with no rival and became an undisputed master of the Eastern Provinces. In all his campaigns Amar Singh the Bhojpur chief, gave unstinted support to Shah Shuja. In appreciation of his services Shah Shuja issued a *farman* (since Shuja was now a self styled Mughal Emperor) dated 5th July 1658, assuring him to give him promotion for the services rendered in the campaigns against Sulaiman Shikoh. Shah Shuja also mentioned that it is hoped that he would continue to provide sincere services in future also. Soon afterwards, he was asked to come to his presence. But it appears that Amar Singh did not visit his court. The reason seems to be that he might have analyzed the then prevailing condition of Bhojpur and found that even his temporary absence for a few weeks might spell disaster to his small estate on account of the intrigues and mechanizations of Koklat *Ujjainia*.

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102. The *Nishan* is dated 25th March, 1658, available at Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner.

He therefore, sent his younger brother, Parbal Singh, to receive the rewards on his behalf. He also requested Shah Shuja to take necessary steps to humble Koklat *Ujjania,* who had become a powerful force in that region.[103]

Shah Shuja was unhappy with Kokalat *Ujjainia* because he had joined Dara Shikoh and was present on the side of Sulaiman Shikoh in the battle of Bahadurpur (Feb, 1658). Therefore Shah Shuja appointed one of his officers Syed Jan-i-Alam to punish Koklat *Ujjainia.* Amar Singh also accompanied Jan-i-Alam and the combined forces inflicted crushing defeat on Kokalat *Ujjainia* and forced him out of Bhojpur.

After this victory, Shah Shuja again issued a *farman* to Amar Singh. The contents of the *farman* quoted below clearly shows Shuja's desperate attempt to keep Amar Singh to his side in future also.[104]

> "Amar Singh may know that since at present time the facts of his bravery Syed Jan-i-Alam, the brave and the gallant and the devoted Servant in the act of resisting and punishing the accursed Koklat have been brought to the notice of the enlightened, most sacred and most humble self (Shah Shuja) by the Said Khan (Syed Jan-i-Alam) and they have attracted the extra attention of the Emperor, by way of imperial favour, the robe of honour has been given to him (Amar Singh). In the circumstances, the high and exalted command has received the honour of being issued to the effect that the best among the contemporaries (Amar Singh) grateful to the great and high gift and bounty that has emanated from the excessive royal favours in respect of his, should show his devotion and efforts and in discharging his duties, in assistance and association with the aforesaid Khan (Jan-i-Alam), he (Amar Singh) should make such efforts as might bring more royal favours so that he may become more exalted and high amongst the

103. T.U. II, P. 59.
104. B.P. Ambashthaya, "Some Historical papers of ..... op. cit. PP. 276-77.

> contemporaries, and that the Said Khan may continue to report to him (Shah Shuja) about his (Amar Singh) sincerity and devotion".[105]

After the battle of Samugarh, Shah Shuja received the whole of Bihar in addition to Bengal and Orissa and Dara Shikoh directed his officers at Allahabad, Banaras, Chunar, Jaunpur and Rohtas to handover the charge to Shah Shuja. As a result of this, Shah Shuja found the Eastern Provinces completely at his disposal. But some of the officers posted in these regions refused to obey the orders of Dara Shikoh. Therefore, Shah Shuja dispatched an army, and conquered Rohtas, Chunar, Varanasi and Allahabad. In all these exploits Amar Singh rendered valuable services for which he won high appreciation from Shah Shuja. Shah Shuja was also extremely pleased with Amar Singh on account of his sincere support in exterminating Koklat *Ujjainia*. This is evident from the *farman* of Shah Shuja dated 21st Nov. 1658:

> "By this time, the light spreading and auspicious *farman* received the honour of being issued and released to the effect that since the accursed and unlucky Koklat (Gokul Chand) had turned his face from the road of obedience to the wilderness of rebellion, he has in consequence of his mischievousness come into the valley of destruction, whereas Amar Singh, the best among the contemporaries and the likes by sincere faith and pure-heartedness has come into the knowledge of the high (Shah Shuja) for his having rendered loyal and good service, the said prop among the contemporaries (Amar Singh) has been rewarded by way of royal favour with the charge of Bhojpur etc, as detailed below after dispossessing the accursed Koklat (Gokul Chand) and that he has been given the title of '*Raja*' by way of distinction among his likes and equals. It is necessary that *Mutasaddis* (*Peshkars* or head clerks) performing the administration, the *faujdars*, *Jagirdars*, and the *Karoris* of the time and onwards and the *zamindars*,

105. "Some Historical Papers of Dumraon Raj", op.cit., p. 277.

> *Chaudhris*, *Qanungos*, *Muqaddams*, the tenants, cultivators, all inhabitants and ordinary residents of the said *Mahal* should regard the aforesaid Amar Singh as the *Raja* of that place. All privileges connected with the above mentioned dismissed one (Gokul Chand *Ujjainia*) must be treated as having been bestowed upon the said (Amar Singh). That the state officers and subjects, all shall do their best in enforcing and obeying this order. Worthy to be performed and that they shall regard him (Amar Singh) as being powerful in discharging his duties and that they shall not disregard his advice which would be conducive to loyalty and good administration and maintenance (*Nankar* etc.) which are in consonance with the old traditional law, are to be dealt with, by him. He has been empowered to appoint or dismiss at his discretion. It is incumbent on the recorded best among the contemporaries (Amar Singh) to remain obedient and loyal to the state with sincerity and good faith. He (Amar Singh) shall leave no stone unturned in performing, loyal, good and meritorious services by associating himself with the officiate of the state alongwith his followers, shall satisfy all legal demands and dues of the *Diwani* (writ state dues) faithfully and uprightly shall make good efforts for the prosperity and progress of the Mahal (Big Village) and shall treat every one nicely so that they may be delightful, prosperous, and grateful and *Mahal* may become more and more prosperous and populated day by day. Treat this with utmost strictness and act according to orders".[106]

However Shah Shuja could not remain at peace for a long time in the region because the war of succession took a new turn. Aurangzeb after defeating Dara Shikoh in the battle fought at Dharmat and Samugarh succeeded to the throne and desptached an army under Muhamamd Sultan and Mir Jumla to expel Shah Shuja. In the battle fought at Khajwah, Shah Shuja was defeated and forced to flee towards Tanda. He was hotly chased by Muhammad Sultan and Mir Jumla and driven out of Bengal to die a miserable death at some unknown place in Arakan hills. It appears that Amar Singh never betrayed his

106. B.P. Ambashthaya, "Some Historical... op. cit. P. 279.

patron, the unfortunate Shah Shuja in his vicissitudes. He rendered all possible help to his benefactor. His services were appreciated by Shah Shuja again through a *farman* issued on 22nd January 1659 soon after the battle of Khajwah. Shah Shuja writes:

> "Raja Amar Singh may know that Sadqat Khan, the brave dignified and Dayanat Khan, the frugal, have repeatedly submitted in letter to the exalted self that the best among the likes (Amar Singh) alongwith his followers remains present (with Shuja's followers). Thus he has fulfilled his obligations. It is expedient that he should be prepared to appear with full confidence before the light spreading (Shah Shuja), as soon as he is wanted. In the meantime while he should persuade his son to come with a *Wakil* before the *Huzur* (Shah Shuja) so that he may explain sacred (Shah Shuja) all the facts about Bhojpur and his brother (Prabal Singh) who is already with the King (Shah Shuja) shall be then sent back. This must be treated with utmost strictness and act according to orders".[107]

In the above *farman* of Shah Shuja high sounding epithets are not used for Amar Singh. Similarly in the *farman,* Amar Singh had also not been promised of any reward and other favours despite the fact that he provided all possible help to Shah Suja; commanded and fulfilled his all other commitments. This may indicate that Shah Shuja had actually became weak as a consequence of his defeat at Khajwa. Moreover, it also appears from the study of the document that Amar Singh was having problems with his kinsmen in his chieftaincy. He was asked to send his son with a *wakil* to explain the problem at the Shah Shuja court. The aforesaid *farman* also contains the information about the presence of Prabal Singh brother of Amar Singh in the camp of Shah Shuja. It seems that Prabal Singh had come to Shah Shuja to

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107. "Some Historical Papers of Dumraon Raj", op.cit., p. 277.

explain the difficulties of Amar Singh and seek his cooperation. However, it is also possible that Prabal Singh had been kept as an hostage for the safe conduct of Amar Singh. Because during those days of mutual intrigues, disaffection and political instability, the change of the camp had become the order of the day. In the *farman* it had been clearly indicated that Prabal Singh would be sent back after the arrival of Amar Singh's son.

Amar Singh like many other nobles and local chiefs shifted his loyalty after the defeat of Shah Shuja at Khjwa and joined Aurangzeb. The emperor received him favourably and allowed him to continue as the chief of Bhojpur. He was also confirmed to his previous rank and title. Amar Singh continued to help the governor of Bihar in the discharge of his administrative and political responsibilities. The last six years (1659-1665 AD) in Amar Singh's life were on the whole peaceful. He died in 1665 A.D.[108]

Amar Singh as discussed above played a prominent role in the eastern province during the war of succession specially in the battles fought between Shah Shuja and the imperial army under the command of Sulaiman Shikoh and afterwards between Shah Shuja and the army of Aurangzeb under his son Muhammad Sultan. It goes to the credit of Raja Amar Singh that he remained loyal to Shah Shuja even in his worst days. He changed his loyalty only after the departure of Shah Shuja from Bengal. Another important feature of this period in the history of Bhojpur is the emergence of Kokalat *Ujjainia* a rival of Amar Singh. He had become so powerful in the region that Dara Shikoh thought it useful to bring him to his side before fighting a battle against Shah

108. *T.U.*, p. 70.

Shuja. However after the defeat of Dara Shikoh, Koklat *Ujjainia* was also defeated and expelled by Shah Shuja from Bhojpur region. It also emerges from our study that Bhojpur chieftaincy was divided into two rival factions and the warring brothers (Dara & Shuja) took advantage of the situation and both of them succeeded in getting support of the *Ujjainias* towards their side. Thus, Bhojpur presented a divided house during the period of the war of succession and consequently they could not take full advantage of their support from the new emperor. However, Amar Singh's reign as the Chief of Bhojpur which lasted for about eighteen years was quite eventful. Bhojpur once again figured prominently in the arena of imperial politics. He constructed a large number of buildings at his new capital, Mithila. Several mounds are still there and the ruins of the old fort can be seen outside the present village of Bhojpur.[109]

Ujjainias chieftaincy between 1665-1707

After the death of Raja Amar Singh the conflict started between his son, Rudra Singh and his younger brother Prabal Singh for the throne of Bhojpur. Rudra Singh ultimately succeeded to throne of Bhojpur after defeating his uncle Prabal Singh.[110] However unlike his father he could neither get the recognition of his position as the chief of Bhojpur nor granted a rank by Emperor Aurangzeb. He had to wait for seventeen long years to get a rank (1000/800) and the title of Raja.[111] It seems that the grant of imperial *mansab* was delayed for such a long time because Prabal Singh after his defeat at the hands of his

109. *History of Bhojpur*, op. cit. P. 72.

110. Syed Hasan Askari, "The Ujjainia Ancestors of Babu Kunwar Singh". *J.B.R.S.* Vol. XLI (41) 1955. P. 114-115. T.U. II PP. 84-86.

111. *Akhbarat Darbar-i-Muallah dated 2nd Jamaddi-ul Awwal*, 25 R.Y. of Aurangzeb's reign corresponding to 29th April. 1682 A.D. Jaipur State Achieves series Vol. XXVII P. 276 S/L No. 2023 available at Nath Nagar Sodh Samasthan, Sitamau, Malwa, M.P.

nephew, went to Delhi and tried to get the chieftainship of the *Ujjainias* with the support of Emperor Aurangzeb. According to local tradition he was promised the *gaddi* of Bhojpur if he becomes a Muslim. Prabal Singh even converted himself to Islam but he was not given the chieftaincy of Bhojpur. The reasons are not clearly mentioned but apparently by that time Rudra Singh had established himself in Bhojpur and also showed his complete devotion and loyalty to the Emperor. He was also very young and popular among the *Ujjainia* people. Besides that he was also regarded as the rightful ruler of the chieftaincy, being the eldest son of the deceased Raja Amar Singh. The provincial administration also had no complaint against him. On the other hand, Prabal Singh lost the confidence and sympathy of the *zamindars* of the region and the people of Bhojpur on account of his becoming a Muslim. Besides that Prabal Singh had become quite old and thus he had lost the initiative and drive necessary for gaining the cooperation of the powerful elements of the region for regaining the possession of the throne. Moreover, he was also not in the direct line of succession, being the brother of the former ruler of Bhojpur. Probably keeping all these factors in mind Rudra Singh was recognized as the ruler of Bhojpur in preference to Prabal Singh. However Prabal Singh was assigned a *jagir* in *pargana* Piru of *sarkar* Shahabad and the title of '*Raja*' was also conferred on him.[112]

Prabal Singh returned from Delhi to Bhojpur in 1671 A.D. completely disappointed and frustrated but when he was advised to re-embrace Hinduism, he refused to do so. He died in 1772 A.D.[113]

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112 . Ibid. II, p. 99.
113. Ibid. P. 100.

In the first seventeen years of his chieftainship (1665-1681 A.D.), Rudra Singh remained loyal to the Mughal government and offered complete cooperation to the provincial administration. He also visited the imperial court at least on one occasion. There are several references of his administrative activities in the *Akhbarat*.

In one such report it had been mentioned that Raja Rudra Singh after returning from the court, went to Shaikh Ibrahim, the *faujdar* of *Sarkar* Shahabad and informed him that he had been bestowed the *zamindari* of dismissed Raja Bhakhtamand *Ujjainia* (one of the *Ujjainia* chiefs holding the *mansab* of 500/500). Shaikh Ibrahim communicated this order to all the other *faujdars* of the area and requested them to support Rudra Singh in getting control over the *zamindari*. Thereupon Shaikh Ibrahim along with Rudra Singh led an expedition against the rebel Raja. They burnt down the houses of those peasants who had helped Raja Bhakhtamand to escape to Gharhi (Teliagarhi). Being hard pressed the peasants agreed to help imperial administration and by stratagem killed Raja Bakhtamand.[114]

From the *Akhbarat* it also appears that between April and June, 1681 Rudra Singh raised the standard of rebellion. The *Akhbarat* states that a *farman* was issued to Jafar Khan, the *subedar* of Bihar in which he was directed to proceed with Hamid Khan, the *Faujdar*, to chastise Rudra Singh. It seems that the rebellion of Rudra Singh was just in conformity with the age-long tradition of the *Ujjainias*. It was an old practice with the Bhojpur chiefs right from the period of Mughal emperor, Akbar to remain loyal to the Mughal government at

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114. *Jaipur Akhbarat*, Pt. II, S/L No. 1840, Vol. XXXI, PP. 118-120. collected by Dr. B.P. Ambashthaya (vide PIHC, 1968, Bhagalpur, P. 166).

first for a few years and after a decade or two to rebel. Hence, there was nothing very surprising if Rudra Singh also revolted.[115]

However Rudra Singh was having his own grievances against the Mughals. He had become the chief of Bhojpur as early in 1665 but still he was not conferred the title of '*Raja*' or the usual *mansab* of 1000 like his predecessors. According to some local traditions. Kunwar Dhir Ujjainia a rebel, instigated Rudra Singh against the Mughal authority and compelled him to take up arms. Kunwar Dhir was the son of Vikram Shahi. His principality having devolved on Rudra Singh, Dhir's forefathers were allowed only the *zamindari* of Asawa, *Pargana* Pero in Shahabad for the maintenance of the family.[116] But the zamindars were very irregular in paying dues to the state and as a result arrears accumulated. In the reign of Shahjahan sometimes in 1654, Kunwar Dhir's father was the *zamindar* who was ordered to clear the dues immediately and Dhir was taken captive on the order of the Emperor, Shahjahan in 1654. He was detained at Delhi as a surety for the payment of revenue. However, having released on personal surety he collected troops and began to fight against the Mughals. As he was a childhood friend of Rudra Singh, he appealed him to help him in his struggle against the imperial authority. It had also been suggested that Kunwar Dhir raised the issue of re-imposition of *Jizya* and persecution of the Hindus to win his support.[117] Rudra Singh as mentioned above was also unhappy with the imperial administration for ignoring his

115. *History of Bhojpur*, op.cit., p. 76.
116. *T.U.* II, p. 71.
117. Letter of the Manager of Dumraon Raj dated 18/30 July, 1893 to Honorary Philological Secretary, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.

rights. So, he unfurled the banner of revolt and alongwith Kunwar Dhir expelled imperial officials from Mithila area.

Therefore Jafar Khan, the *Subedar* of Bihar was ordered to suppress the rebellion of Rudra Singh[118] But before Jafar Khan could start his campaign against the rebels he was transferred and Safi Khan was appointed the governor of Bihar and also given the responsibility of crushing the rebellion of Bhojpur *zamindars*. The campaign however got delayed due to the on set of rainy season. In the meantime it also came to the notice of the governor that Kunwar Dhir had joined Rudra Singh and due to that the rebels had become quite strong in the whole of Mithila region. Therefore after the end of the rainy season, Safi Khan alongwith Hamid Khan *faujdar* marched towards Mithila at the head of a large army. Rudra Singh avoided to face the Mughal forces directly and he managed to escape in a nearby dense forest in October 1681.[119] The *Akhbarat* also inform us that twelve *mahals* of the estate of Rudra Singh were given to the charge of *Amils* and *Karoris* and the fort at Mithila was raised to the ground.[120] Though Rudra Singh was driven out of his fort, he carried on the guerilla fight from the place of his hiding. The Mughal army stationed at Mithila felt greatly harassed on accounts of these raids. Besides, his friend Kunwar Dhir, was erstwhile also creating much trouble in Tekari region. The alliance between Rudra Singh and Kunwar Dhir was considered dangerous for the Mughal interest in Bihar. Hence to break this alliance Saif Khan, the governor of Bihar an old friend of Rudra's father Amar Singh, personally

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118. B.P. Ambashthaya, "The *Ujjainia* Rajahs of Bhojpur in Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla" *PIHC*, 1968, Bhagalpur, pp. 166-67.
119. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i Mualla* dated 27th Dec. 1681.
120. Ibid.

approached Rudra Singh and became successful in bringing about reconciliation between Rudra Singh and the Mughal governor of Bihar[121]. Rudra Singh agreed to appologise for his rebellion and also accepted to make a payment of one lakh and thirty thousand rupees to the Mughal authority as the war of indemnity. He accepted all these provisions on the assurance that the rank and title held by his father will be restored to him.[122] On the recommendation of Safi Khan, the emperor pardoned Rudra Singh and also restored him the title and rank of his father on condition that "Rudra Singh must accompany the imperial army to Bengal for suppressing the rebellion there".[123] Rudra Singh agreed to obey the orders. Thus all opposition to the Mughal government in the district of Shahabad came to an end with the submission of Rudra Singh. Soon after Kunwar Dhir also went underground. *Akhbarats* have rightly mentioned that no rebel *zamindar* now existed in this district (i.e. Shahabad).[124]

Although, as mentioned in the *Akhbarat*, settlement had been reached between the provincial authority and Rudra Singh after the terms were approved by the Emperor, the rank and title however was not immediately restored. Perhaps Aurangzeb was not convinced of the complete loyalty of Rudra Singh. He himself enquired about the situation in the region and the attitude of the Raja and conferred the rank and title on him only when he was convinced that the Raja had left the path of rebellion and had also completely disassociated himself with Kunwar Dhir. In its report of 29th April 1682 A.D.,

121. Letter of the Manager of Dumraon Raj to the Secretary, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta dated 18/30 July, 1893.

122. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, vol. XXVII, p. 6, *Zilhijja* 25th R.Y. i.e. 27th Dec. 1681.

123. *Akhbarat*, dated 16 safar, 25th R.Y. of Aurangzeb, 1093 A.H. dated 14th Feb. 1682 A.D.

124. Ibid.

Akhbarat records that "Rudra Singh *Ujjainia*, the *zamindar* of Bhojpur, was given the rank of 1000 *zat* and 800 *sawar*. He was deputed with Safi Khan, the governor of Bihar".[125]

Kunwar Dhir, disillusioned at the turn of events, but he continued his rebellious activities. He attacked and took under his possession a village named Holo Konwari, near Betia (in West Champaran) in the *zamindari* of Nanda Shahi Jaithiya. Nand Shahi immediately approached the governor of the *suba* and requested him to help him in getting back his *zamindari* village. Consequently Rudra Singh, was ordered by the governor to punish the *Ujjainia* rebel and reconquer the lost village. The Bhojpur chief marched to Bettiah region with a strong Bhojpuri contingent and defeated Kunwar Dhir.[126]

Sometimes afterwards Raja Rudra Singh was appointed the *faujdar* of *Sarkar* Shahabad after the transfer of Shaikh Ibrahim to Badaon.[127] Though this new assignment was only for a short period but it shows that the *Ujjainia* chief was now able to win back the confidence of the Mughal administration.

It appears that the *faujdari* of *Sarkar* Shahabad was held by the Bhojpur chief only for a few months because in 1683 Aqidat Khan had been mentioned as the *faujdar* of Bhojpur. The *Akhbarat* informs us that the services of Rudra Singh were requisitioned for the suppression of the revolt of Kunwar Dhir. The *Akhbarat* adds that war between Kunwar Dhir and the combined

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125. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, vol. XXXVII, p. 276 S/L No. 20232

126. Letter of Manager, Dumraon Raj to the Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, dated 18/30 July, 1893.

127. The *Akhbarat* dated 16th August, 1682 informs us that Shaikh Ibrahim, the nephew of late Daud Khan, *faujdar* of Shahabad alias Bhojpur was appointed the *faujdar* of Badaon and conferred the rank of 600 *zat* and 600 *sawar* (*Do Asapa*) and was awarded 60,00,000 dams or two lakh rupees for establishment *Se Bande*. The *Faujdari* of Bhojpur was conferred upon Rudra Singh *Ujjainia* and the above mentioned rewards were to be deducted out of the revenue of Bhojpur (Jaipur *Akhbarat* S/L No. 2125 (1-2), p. 549).

forces of Raja Rudra Singh and Aqidat Khan was fought on 2nd Feb., 1683, and Rudra Singh and Aqidat Khan were completely routed by the rebels.[128]

Emboldened with his victory, Kunwar Dhir started making preparation to launch an attack on Arrah, the headquarters of *Sarkar* Shahabad.[129] Aqidat Khan, the *faujdar* of Shahabad, sent urgent appeal to the Mughal emperor for reinforcement. Imperial *farman* was issued to Ummid Khan, *subedar* of Bihar, and Tahmasp Khan, *faujdar* of Chainpur (Bhabhua) for rendering all possible help to Aqidat Khan. Besides, the latter was also asked to seek the help and cooperation of the local *zamindars* for crushing the rebellion of Kunwar Dhir. When the rebel chief came to know about preparations of the *faujdar* of Shahabad, he marched towards Arrah and from there fled to Gorakhpur.

The Bhojpur chief helped *Amils* of *Parganas* Manjhi and Narhan in collection of revenue from the recalcitrant *zamindars* of *sarkar* Saran. The Bhojpur chief was too pleased to render the desired assistance and on account of his active help and cooperation, the revenue arrears of the Mughal government were realized.[130]

The services of Raja Rudra Singh were highly appreciated by the imperial government. *Jagirs* worth annual revenue of 83 lakhs of dams (more than Rupees two lakhs) in *pargana* Haveli Shahabad was granted to him in reward for the services rendered. Earlier these *jagirs* belonged to Shaikh Ibrahim, the *faujdar* of Shahabad.[131]

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128. The *Akhbarat* is dated 7th *Rabiul Awwal* 26th R.Y. of Aurangzeb, i.e. Ist March 1683 A.D.
129. Ibid.
130. *Persian Papers of Dumraon Raj.*
131. Ibid.

In the 27th year of the region of Aurangzeb (1684 A.D.) Rudra Singh was also granted the priviledge of *Bhai Saruma*[132] which was enjoyed by the previous chiefs of Bhojpur.[133] Sometimes in 1685, he was also granted village Belawar in *Pargana* Danwar, *Sarkar* Shahabad.[134]

In 1687 Raja Rudra Singh was empowered to collect 2½ per cent of revenue as *Rasoom-i-Rajgi*[135] from *Pargana* Kharid in *Sarkar* Jaunpur in *Suba* Allahabad.[136] He was awarded a sum of Rs. 1500/- for some special expenses in 1690 and was directed to collect the said amount from the villages of *pargana* Kharid of *Sarkar* Jaunpur, *Suba* Allahabad.[137]

Taking advantage of his good relation with the Mughals, Raja Rudra Singh tried to consolidate his position in his own chieftaincy. From security point of view, he shifted his capital from Mithila to Buxar.[138] Mithila had been destroyed by the Mughals when he had rebelled against them during 1680-81. His choice fell on Buxar because it was located on the bank of the holy river Ganga and it also lay nearer to his *Jagirs* in *suba* Allahabad.

Meanwhile Kunwar Dhir who had fled to Gorakhpur, as discussed above, established his headquarters at Barhaj in the dense and impenetrable jungles of Gorakhpur and built a strong fostress. He again started plundering imperial territories and harassing officials posted there. Raja Rudra Singh was again deputed to suppress the rebellious activities of Kunwar Dhir. The

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132. It was a feudal right.
133. *Persian papers of Dumraon Raj.*
134. This Persian document of Dumraon Raj is dated *Rabiul-Awwal,* 28th R.Y. of Aurangzeb (7th Feb. 1685).
135. A grant for meeting administrative expenses.
136. *Persian papers of Dumraon Raj*, dated 18th April, 1687.
137. *Persian papers of Dumraon Raj.*
138. T.U. II. P.P. 56.

successive defeats suffered by Kunwar Dhir at the hands of Rudra Singh, convinced Kunwar Dhir that he will not be able to humble Rudra Singh in an open battle because of the vast resources that he had at his command.[139] He also knew that unless Rudra Singh was eliminated, he will have no future in the Bhojpur region. Therefore to fulfill his ambition, he hatched a conspiracy and poisoned him in a strange manner.

The poison worked and the Raja felt that his end is near. However, he managed to reach Buxar fort infull sense.[140] After reaching the fort, he instructed his eldest wife to declare his cousin Mandhata Singh (son of Prabal Singh) as his successor immediately after his death. The eldest Queen did as instructed by her dying husband. It was made out in public that Raja Rudra Singh had crowned Mandhatta Singh as his successor which was accepted by the nobles and the people of Bhojpur and also by the Mughal government.[141]

Raja Rudra Singh died of poisoning in 1699.[142] Raja Rudra Singh ruled for thirty four years. He was a successful ruler. His services to the Mughal government were duly recognized. He enjoyed the confidence of the Mughal emperor so much so that he was appointed though temporarily the *faujdar* of *Sarkar* Shahabad. It was indeed a rare honour for him. He was assigned the *Jagirs* worth the annual revenue of 83 lakhs of *dams* (more than rupees two lakh) in *Pargana* Haveli Shahabad. He was also empowered to collect 2 ½ per cent of revenue as *Rasoom-i-Rajgi* from *Pargana* Kharid in

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139. Letter of the Manager of Dumraon Raj to the Secretary of the Asiatic Society, Bengal, Calcutta, dated 18/30 July 1893 A.D.
140. Ibid. PP. 84-85, 101-102.
141. Ibid.
142. Ibid. Letter of the Manager of Dumraon Raj. Op. cit.

Sarkar Jaunpur in *Suba* Allahabad. In 1690 he was awarded a sum of Rs. 1500/- for some special expenses which he had to collect from the villages of *Pargana* Kharid of *Sarkar* Jaunpur, *Suba*, Allahabad.

Although Raja Rudra Singh was succeeded by his cousin Mandhadata Singh son of his uncle Prabal Singh as the chief of Bhojpur in 1699 AD. Prabal Singh had one other son named Sujan Singh. Sujan Singh was equally brave and ambitious. He was extremely affectionate to his elder brother Mandhata Singh and promised to remain loyal to him. In their early life, they had suffered together because of family feud.[143] Later on both of them worked, in close cooperation with the provincial officials of Bihar and jointly received imperial favours during the life time of Raja Rudra Singh. In 1682 A.D. they were assigned village Baharanpur alongwith Sonbarsa in *Pargana* Behia for their maintenance.[144] In 1687, *Jagirs* worth 12,58000 *dams* (i.e. Rs. 3,14,500) in Haveli *Sarkar* Shahabad, were also awarded to them which formed a part of the *Jagir* of Raja Rudra Singh, the former *Ujjainia* chief of Bhojpur.[145] According to another Persian document, we learn that Ghulam Muhammad, the *Shiqdar* of *Pargana* Samal, in the *Sarkar* of Shahabad agreed to pay the revenue of the *Pargana* jointly to Mandhata Singh and Sujan Singh as per the terms of the *Qubuliyat*[146]. The grant of these *Jagirs* jointly to Mandhata and Sujan Singh is indicative of the fact that both the brothers enjoyed the confidence of the Mughal government, and both of them pulled on well with each other during the chieftainship of Raja Rudra Singh.

143. *T.U.* II. P. 103.
144. *Persians Papers of Dumraon Raj.*
145. Ibid.
146. Persian document is dated 1083 A.H. or 1631 and it is addressed jointly to Mandhata Singh and Sujan Singh.

Mandhata Singh retained Buxar as his headquarters till 1702 A.D. but in the same year he shifted his capital to Mithila.[147]It had become an age old tradition of the *Ujjainias* Raja that the chieftains frequently changed their capitals soon after coming to the throne. Mandhata Singh considered Mithila as centrally located from where he could administer his chieftaincy in a better way. Besides that he had childhood memories associated with Mithila and local tradition are of the view that, this was the most important factor for the change of capital. Though the capital was shifted from Buxar to Mithila, the widow Maharani Devi Kunwar, (eldest wife of late Raja Rudra Singh) decided to stay at Buxar because of her late husband had close association with the town. Due to that and also because it was holy place situated on the bank of Ganga, the town remained prosperous even after the change of capital.[148]

Mandhata Singh was very keen that his younger brother should also take some responsibility in the administration of the chieftaincy, and following arrangements were made : Mandhata Singh himself looked after the general administration of the estate with Mithila as his headquarters[149], while Sujan Singh, his younger brother was given commandant of the army. He was also entrusted with the responsibility of looking after the administration of Jagdishpur and the adjoining areas from his headquarters at Jagdishpur.[150] In the beginning, the arrangement made by Mandhata Singh worked very well, but Kunwar Dhir who had attempted to capture Bhojpur at the time of Rudra Singh's, death, attacked Buxar and occupied several villages of *Parganas* Piru

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147. *T.U.* II. P. 107.
148 . Ibid., p. 108.
149. Ibid. P. 107.
150. Ibid.

and Nonar.[151] Mandhata Singh and Sujan Singh having failed to check the advantage of Kunwar Dhir appealed to Prince Azimus Shan (the grandson of Aurangzeb) the governor of Bihar to protect him and his chieftancy from the onslaught of the rebel Kunwar Dhir. The Prince took him under his protection and issued a *Nishan* in 1705, directing Muhammad Ali, Imperial *Bakhshi* to proceed to Bhojpur for maintaining order and security and to give due honour and eminence to Mandhata Singh.[152] Mandhata Singh was also ordered to extend full cooperation to Muhammad Ali, the Imperial *Bakhshi*, in his work.[153] As a result of the efforts of the Imperial *Bakshi*, order was restored in Bhojpur and Kunwar Dhir had to withdraw from the areas that he had occupied.

Mandhata Singh felt obliged to the Prince and out of a sense of gratitudes, he gave all possible help and cooperation to him in his administrative work. He was granted *Jagir* of *Pargana* Kopachi in *Sarkar* Ghazipur in *Suba* Allahabad for the observance of *Rasoom Rajgi*[154] and also for meeting expenses of Bhojpur officials for performing government duties.[155]

The situation took a new turns in 1707 after the departure of Azim-us Shan to Delhi. Husain Ali the new governor of Bihar was a strong and efficient administrator. He started realizing the land revenue with free hand. As the Bhojpur chieftaincy was in arrears, the governor sent an army to force the chief to pay the entire dues due on him (Mandhata Singh). Kunwar Dhir took

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151. *T.U.* II. P. 108.
152. Persian Papers of Dumraon Raj.
153. Ibid.
154. A feudal custom.
155. *Persian papers of Dumraon Raj.* T.U. II, P. 109-110.

advantage of the situation and joined the camp of Bihar governor against Bhojpur chief in this conflict.

But unfortunately Mandhata Singh became a victim of the conspiracy jointly hatched by his younger brother, Sujan Singh and Kunwar Dhir. As long as Janki Bharthi Gosain the mother of the two brothers Mandhata Singh and Sujan Singh was alive, the relationship between the two brothers remained cordial. The brothers were actually brought up by Janaki Bharathi Gosain all by herself because her husband Prabal Singh remained imprisoned at Delhi for a long time. Even in those adverse circumstances she provided her sons best possible education and other necessities of life. This must have created a great impression on them and quite naturally they obeyed their mother's orders without any reservation. Hence, during her life time both of them were affectionate to each other and lived in complete harmony. But after her death differences cropped up between the two; mainly because of usual clash for political power among the sons of deceased chief. Janaki Bharthi Gosain Devi was able to restrain the brothers, whenever a problem arose between the two. The main cause of friction was an area assigned in *Jagir* by the Mughals to the two brothers jointly during the life time of Rudra Singh. Now this problem which mainly related to the management of the assigned villages and the distribution of its income aggravated. Kunwar Dhir was waiting for an opportunity to get support from the Bhojpur chief for his own cause, widened their differences and succeeded in mining over Sujan Singh to his side. Besides, the dowager, Rani Mahadevi, the eldest wife of Raja Rudra Singh was also displeased with Mandhata Singh, because the latter had deserted, Buxar (established by her late husband with which she had emotional attachment) the

headquarters of her late husband and shifted to Mithila. She considered Mandhata's action as most ungreatful because he could succeed to the throne only with her crucial support. Thus three powerful forces combined to oppose Mandhata Singh. It may be said that a triple alliance was formed consisting of the dowager queen of Bhojpur, Mahadevi, the arch rebel and an enemy of Mandhata Singh Kunwar Dhir and Sujan Singh, the Younger brother of Mandhata Singh. They jointly conspired to murder Mandhata Singh. The conspiracy was successfully carried out and Mandhata was brutally murdered in 1708 A.D. But Sujan Singh's desire of succeeding to the Bhojpur throne was also not fulfilled because he too was murdered by one of the loyal servants of Mandhata Singh.[156]

156. *T.U.* II, p 110.

Chapter - IV

THE *CHEROS* OF PALAMAU

Many tribes rose to power in the period following the decline of the Palas. The most prominent among them were Bhars (a dominant community in the eastern Uttar Pradesh and Central Bihar), the Kharwars (in Son valley) and the *Cheros* in South Bihar. But the *Cheros* emerged as the most powerful state of the region. They established small principalities in Shahabad, Saran, Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Palamau regions of Bihar and remained a force to reckon with for about three hundred years (1150 to 1450 AD).[1]

It seems that the *Cheros*[2] were able to establish their power in Western Bihar in the first quarter of 12th century, and area over which they ruled, extended from the east of Banaras to the west of Patna and Bihar Sharif and from the south of the Ganga to the north of the Vindhaya range (Kaimur). They were described as the masters of the Gangetic plains.[3]

According to local traditions during 12th century, four prominent *Chero* chiefs belonging to Kolarian tribe of Dravidian origin, held large area in the

1. K.S. Singh, *The Cheros* (Ms). *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, vol. II Pt. I edited by Syed Hasan Askari and Q. Ahmad, p. 259.
2. The Cheros are a semi aboriginal or semi Dravidian tribe who with Bhars and Sawars dominated the whole of the province of Bihar particularly the district of Shahabad, which according to Cunningham may be identified with the ancient *Kukradesh* of Puranas. Col. Dalton found their affinity with people speaking Mundarian and Kolarian language. While Elliot considered them as a branch of Bhara tribe. (*Mirzapur District Gazetteer*, J.B.R.S. March, 1955, p. 108). However Buchanan says that Cheros belonged to the Princes of Sunaka family who ruled over Kikat region (Magadh) in the time of Gautama Budha (Francis Buchanan : '*An Account of the District of Shahabad*', p. 40).
3. According to a tradition, *Chero* chief killed Mansur Hallaj Shahid the eldest son of the Sufi saint Shaikh Qadir Makhdum Owais in southern Muzaffarpur. It is said that Mansur with his proselytizing zeal attempted to erect a mosque on the ruins of a mound of a Basasrh and invited the wrath of the *Chero* chief. This incident probably took place in 13th century A.D. The traces of the forts and towns of the Cheros Rajas have been found elsewhere in the Chapra and Muzaffarpur districts (K.S. Singh, op.cit. Also *the Comprehensive History of Bihar*, op.cit., p. 260).

south of Bihar or Kikat region (Magadh) in general and Bhojpur in particular, were ruling in this region[4]. Bihia was the headquarters of the *Chero* chief Ghughulia who is still remembered in folklores. The headquarters of the second kingdom was Tirawan, about a mile from Dumraon, in the heart of Bhojpur region. Raja Sita Rai, son of Ramchandra Rai was the ruling chief during this period. Chainpur was the headquarters of the third principality with Raja Salabahim as the ruler.[5] Raja Phulchand was the *Chero* chief of the fourth kingdom which included Chakai, Tulsipur, Ramgrawa, Piri, Biri, Jogibar, Bhairia and Ghosia; the headquarters of this kingdom was Deo Markande in the *Pargana* Dinara in Sahasram.

They were however, expelled from many places by *Ujjainias* of Bhojpur with whom they seems to have been engaged in frequent fights from 14^{th} to 16^{th} century.[6] The Afghan sources mentions that the *Cheros* were quite powerful in Shahabad region. The author of *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* writes that Maharata *Chero* had become so powerful that Sher Shah had to send Khawas Khan, one of his most competent military commanders to punish him. Khawas Khan moved swiftly into *Chero* chief's headquarters but before the campaign could be affectively taken up Sher Shah overtook Humayun at Chausa and full scale war with the Mughals appeared imminent.[7] Therefore Khawas Khan was called back and the campaign against *Chero* chief was temporarily suspended. However soon after his conquest, Sher Shah dispatched Khawas Khan again and the *Chero* chief was defeated and killed. Despite Maharata *Chero* defeat, according

4. See chapter on *Ujjainia*.
5. A part of Chainpur appears to have been occupied by another chief.
6. *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, II, pp. 32-33.
7. Abbas Khan Sherwani, *Tarikh-i-Shershahi* ed. S..M. Imamuddin, Dhaka, 1964, pp. 127-129, 135 to 136.

to Niamatullah, the *Cheros* used to come out of their stronghold in the hills and forests and harass the peasants of South Bihar and entirely closed the road to Gaur.[8] Ahmad Yadgar the author of *Tarikh-i-Shahi* narrates another incident about a clash between the armies of Sher Khan and Maharata *Chero.*[9] He writes that Sher Khan wanted to take possession of a white elephant called *Shayam Sundar* from Maharata *Chero*. On Maharata *Chero's* refusal, Sher Shah ordered Khawas Khan to punish the Raja and capture the elephant. Khawas Khan marched from Rohtas at the head of 4000 horses, crossed a river and passed through a very difficult mountain defile. The *Chero* chief was besieged and compelled to surrender the elephant. Khawas Khan returned to Sher Khan alongwith the coveted white elephant and huge war booty.[10] The destruction of the *Chero* chief is mentioned as one of the three great achievements of Sher Shah.[11]

We have given above a brief account of the four *Chero* chieftaincies of Kikat region. None of these, however, remained important during Mughal period. The *Chero* chief of Palamau in extreme south Bihar, in the Chotanagpur region emerged as the most powerful ruler among the *Cheros*, during Mughal period. In the present chapter we have discussed in detail about their relations with the Mughal rulers.

Palamau is situated at Auranga river about 20 miles south-east of Daltenganj.[12] It is beyond southern limits of Bihar; spread over an uneven land,

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8. Khawaja Niamatullah, *Tarikh-i-khan-i-Jahani Lodi-o Makhzani Afghani*, ed. Imam Ali Din, Dacca, 1960, op.cit. 1960, p. 300.

9. Ahmad Yadgar Khan, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, p. 191. Also *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, p. 76.

10. Rizkullah Mustaqui, *Waqiat-i-Mustaqui*, Rotograph, Aligarh, p. 110.

11. The three great works accomplished by Sher Khan were the destruction of the Maharata Chero, the capture and destruction of Raisin and the re-establishment of Islam in Nagor by the expulsion of Maldeo (Rizkullah Mustaqui, *Waqiat-i-Mustaqui*, op.cit., p. 110).

12. L.S.S.O. Malley, *Bengal District gazetteers of Palamau*, vol. 9, 1907, Calcutta, p. 157.

leading to the plateau of Chotanagpur in the south-east and the central provinces in the south-west. The area is full of broken mountains and hills with many rain fed rivers but unfit for navigation and yielding no assured supply of water for irrigation. The southern part of the district is extremely rocky and barren with only small patches of dense forests at some places. In the northern part, the valleys are a little wider and more fertile; but no where in the district it is possible to get more than six or seven miles of cultivable land available at one place. From the summit of a ridge or hill, the country appears covered by a waving sheet of low forest, with all sign of human habitation concealed from view except perhaps a glimpse of here and there of a low red filled roof, a distant grove of trees, or an occasional herd of cattle.[13] Palamau, according to Mughal Historians, lay south of Patna, the distance from latter to the northern boundary of the former being 71 miles. It is likely that the *Cheros* territory extended upto Daudnagar or Arwal, where the remains of the *Cheros* forts have been found. Toward the north-east, the *Cheros* were mentioned by Abul Fazl as the Principal *zamindar* in Chai Champa (Ramgharh) and Pundag (Palamau).[14]

The *Chero* chiefs of Palamau appear to have been descendents of Raja Salabahim of Chainpur. It is believed that a *Chero* chief of Shahabad, Bhagwant Rai took service under the Raksel Rajput chief, Man Singh of Palamau, and after murdering him[15] founded his own kingdom in around 1572.[16] Thereafter we have no account of any other *Chero* ruler until Anant *Chero* a contemporary of Emperor Akbar.

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13 . O'Malley, op.cit., pp. 2-3, 6-9.

14 . Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari* ed. Saiyid Ahmad Khan, Delhi, 1856, p. 418.

15 . Hunter, op.cit., pp. 455-56.

16 . *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, op.cit., p. 269. Also O'Malley, op.cit., pp. 19-20.

In the contemporary Persian historical works, Anant *Chero* is referred in the account of 1590-91, when Raja Man Singh the governor of Bihar launched an attack against refrectory chiefs of Bihar. There in it had been mentioned that after suppressing the chiefs of Kharakpur and Gidhaur, Man Singh attacked Anant *Chero* of Palamau. Anant *Chero* made a desperate attempt to check the advance of Raja Man Singh by blocking his path, but he miserably failed to do so. However the *Cheros* offered strong resistance to the invading army but they were outnumbered; a large number of them were killed and many of them were taken prisoners.[17] Raja Man Singh captured valuable booty including fifty four elephants which were dispatched to the imperial court[18] and apparently Palamau was brought under Mughal administration. However from *Akbarnama* and other contemporary accounts it is not very clear as to what sort of understanding was reached between the Mughals and Anant *Chero*. Generally in the terms of understanding reached between a chieftain and Mughal imperial authority, besides accepting overlordship of the imperial authority, the chieftains also used to agree to pay either *Peshkash* or paid *malguzari* or offer military service. In the case of *Cheros* we do not get any reference to indicate that Anant *Chero* formally accepted any of these conditions. However, the *Cheros* did not create any problem against Akbar till his death. But soon after his death Anant *Chero* drove out the imperial troops from Palamau and declared his independence. Due to the rebellion of Khusrau, it seems that no immediate action could be taken against the rebels. In 1607 after the appointment of Afzal Khan as the governor of Bihar and Iradat Khan made his *diwan* and *bakhshi*, the Emperor ordered both

17. *Akbarnama* III, p. 576.
18. *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, op.cit, p. 268.

of them to lead an expedition against Anant *Chero*. Afzal Khan along with Iradat Khan launched an attack against the rebels but, Afzal Khan suffered from an incurable disease and died within two weeks of the launching of the offensive.[19] The campaign therefore was given up. But soon afterwards the Mughal officers launched repeated attacks on the *Cheros* and inflicted heavy losses on them. The situation became so bad that the *Chero* chief shifted his capital deep into his territory to protect themselves.[20]

During the same period another branch of *Chero* chief led by Kumkum Chand Jharap was also involved in a bitter struggle with the *Ujjainias* of Bhojpur. *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* had discussed in detail the struggle of the *Cheros* to regain their lost position which continued for almost four years (1607-1611).[21] As mentioned earlier *Cheros* were extremely hostile to *Ujjainias* because they had expelled them from Bhojpur region which was their ancestral homeland. Around 1607 a number of *Chero* chiefs combined together and launched an spirited attack on *Ujjanias*.[22] One of the descendents of Sita Ram Rai of Bhojpur, Kumkum Chand Jharap, expelled the *Ujjanias* and recaptured a major part of their territory. Jharap was a courageous and powerful *Chero* chief. He defied imperial armies stationed at Arwal, Sherghati and Aurangabad, and plundered and pillaged a large number of villages.

The *Ujjanias* could not offer much resistance because their chief Raja Narayan Mal who had usurped the throne after deposing the weak *Ujjania* Raja Mukut Mani in 1607, had gone to the Mughal court to get his confirmation as the

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19 . Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* vol. I, tr. M.I. Borah, Gulwahati, 1936, p. 12.

20 . *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, op.cit.,. pp. 268-69.

21 . *Tawarikh-i-Ujjania II*, pp. 28-33.

22 . For details see Chapter on *Ujjanias*, pp. 44-46.

ruler of the *Ujjanias* from emperor Jahangir. As a consequence, the *Cheros* succeeded in driving out *Ujjanias* from large part of Bhojpur region. It seems Raja Narain Mal came to know of the attack of *Cheros* while he was still at imperial court. He brought these developments to the notice of the emperor and also got assurance of the imperial support against the *Cheros*. Thereafter he immediately returned to his people and set up his headquarters at Buxar. To check the further advance of the *Cheros* he raised a strong army and deployed it from Buxar to Tirawan along the Ganga. This action of Narayan Mal further confirms our suggestion that *Ujjanias* had been driven to the Ganga and the *Cheros* had virtually re-occupied their old territory.[23] With the arrival of Narayan Mal the *Ujjanias* regrouped and started making strong efforts to recapture their lost territories. Kum Kum Chand Jharap realized that he will not be able to resist the onslaught of Narayan Mal alone for long and appealed to *Cheros* of Sonepari region to come to his help. The Sonpari *Cheros* responded favourably and a large number of them led by Rajas of Kaddhar, Anandichak and Balaunja (Japla) joined Kum Kum Chand Jharap to counter Ujjanias. They repaired the trenches around the Tirawan fort, reinforced it with war material and other provisions and deployed their own retainers from Tirawan to Kaddhar and upto river Sone.[24]

The rival armies faced each other for twenty one days. On the twenty-second day, the *Cheros* made a determined attack, showering arrows from all sides to expel the *Ujjanias* from their secure positions. The *Ujjanias* moved cautiously in a row firmly behind their shields and succeeded in repulsing

23 . *Tawarikh-i-Ujjania* II, p. 28.

24 . Ibid., pp. 27-28.

Cheros from their positions. They moved further and launched a surprise attack on the fort of Tirawan. The besieged were under tremendous pressure because of the shortage of food and fodder and other war materials. The morale of the besieged was so low that they contemplated of vacating the fort. Fortunately just about the same time Raja Madha Mundra of Lohardaga came to their help. He made a spirited speech to motivate them to continue their battle against the *Ujjainia* as follows :

"Brothers do not lose heart. This is a battle field. To run away from it, is shameful. This is our forefather's land. To die for it, is our duty. In the world of courage and bravery always prevail. It is a matter of sorrow that a handful of *Ujjanias* should put us to rout. The enemies are nothing. There is dissension among them. Victory is ours, let our swords and axe drink their blood. Let us put them to sword and spare none.[25]

Heartened by these words, the *Cheros* fought bravely and foiled the attempt of the *Ujjanias* to capture the fort. A large number of *Ujjanias* were killed, and forced to retreat. Pratap Singh, brother of Raja Narain was in front of the retreating Ujjanias army. The *Cheros* mistook Pratap Singh for Narain Mal and surrounded him. About the same time Thakur Rai Kalyan Singh, *Bakhshi* of the Mughal imperial army who was left at Buxar by Narain Mal with half of the army, reached Bhojpur and joined Narain Mal. Words spread in the *Cheros* camp that imperial army had arrived to help *Ujjanias*. The *Cheros* once again got demoralized with this new development; however they continued their struggle. On the other hand, with this reinforcement Narain Mal launched an

25. *Tawarikh-i-Ujjania* II, pp. 28-29.

attack on the *Cheros* from all four sides with renewed vigour. *Cheros* too responded vigorously; all male members of the community joined the battle and their females helped them by throwing stones with slings.[26] A fierce fight ensued and in hand to hand engagement commanders of both the armies showed great valour. But the *Ujjainias* succeeded in completely defeating the *Cheros*. A large number of *Cheros* including Saran Jharap, the *Raja* of Lohardaga, Haratpal and Raja Madha Mandra were killed in the battle. Those who escaped the slaughter, were drowned in river Sone. A huge booty came into the possession of *Ujjanias*. Deogon and Kothi, the two important forts of the *Cheros* were razed to the ground as discussed earlier. This important battle was fought in 1611 on the ninth day (*navami*) of the Dushehra. After this victory Narain Mal was accepted as the undisputed leader of the *Ujjanias*. He successfully destroyed the power of *Cheros* and expelled them from Bhojpur region. However after ruling for a decade he was killed by his own kinsmen in a family feud.[27]

Surprisingly we don't find any reference of Anant *Chero* in this war with *Ujjanias*. There is also no reference of Anant *Chero* in Mughal chronicles after Afzal Khan's failed expedition against him. Anant *Chero* died in 1619 and was succeeded by his son Bhupal Rai who also died within a year.

Raja Bhupat Rai was succeeded by Medini Rai (1620-34), the greatest *Chero* ruler whose period of reign had been described as the age of the peace and prosperity. However in one of the inscriptions at Palamau Medini Rai, is mentioned as the son of Anant Rai, who was the son of Bhagwant Rai. Bhupal Rai is not mentioned in the said inscription. It seems that Medini Rai might have

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26 . *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* II, p. 28.

27 . *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

captured the kingdom after defeating his elder brother, Bhupat Rai in family feud which was common in the chieftaincies.[28]

After consolidating his position Medini Rai started making efforts to expand his chieftaincy. He invaded Khokhra in Chotanagpur region, defeated Durjan Sal its chief and ransacked his capital. He also extended his sway over south Gaya and set up posts at Kothi (*Pargana* Sherghat in Gaya), Kunda (Chatra subdivision of Hazaribagh), and Deogan (Palamau). The first two outposts were on highway to Palamau and Deogan might have been some kind of a fort before it was re-built by Bharat Rai, at a later date.[29]

Medini Rai also conquered some of the Rajas of smaller kingdoms who paid him tributes. These kingdoms were Belounja Siris, Jupla, Kutumba and Sherghati in Gaya, Kunda Karnapura and Ramgarh in Hazaribagh and portion of Surguja.[30]

Medini Rai's claim of being one of the greatest ruler of the *Cheros* rests not so much on his conquests but for establishing peace and prosperity in the chieftaincy. He founded villages, constructed irrigation works, encouraged reclamation of lands and settled tribals like the Paharias. Medini Rai also distributed lands to the landless people. In a popular folklore it has been mentioned that in his time, every household was provided with bread and butter (*Raja Medinia ghar ghar baje bathania*).[31]

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28 . *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, p. 269.

29 . Ibid., p. 269.

30 . Ibid., p. 270.

31 . *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, op.cit, p. 270.

The most remarkable building constructed by him was a fort build on a hill overlooking the river Auranga. It was more elegantly constructed than the old fort and was essentially a military fort. The structure was completed according to a bilingual inscription (in Persian and *Devnagiri*) which addressed Medini Rai as '*Maharaja*' and begins with an salutation to both Allah the great and Ramchandraji in February 1634.[32] Medini Rai died towards the end of 1634 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Raja Pratap Rai (Singh).[33]

According to one tradition, it is pointed out that Abdullah Khan, the governor of Bihar attacked over Palamau in 1637.[34] But it is quite clear that Abdullah Khan had not invaded Palamau in 1627-28; during this time he was engaged in reducing the rebel *Raja* Pratap *Ujjania*. In the same year Shaista Khan was appointed the governor of Bihar in place of Abdullah Khan. It appears that during the years of governorship of Abdullah Khan the *Cheros* became more defiant. One of the invasions took place during 1641-43 which has been described in details in *Badshahnama*.[35]

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32 . *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, op.cit, p. 270.

33 . *The Comprehensive History of* Bihar, p. 271. He has been called by Medieval historians son of Balbhadra which was one of titles of Medini Rai.

34 . The local traditions, as collected by Mr. Forbes from the Mowar of Monatu, one of the oldest inhabitants says that in 1627 during Shahjahan period, Abdullah Khan, the governor of Bihar, made the demands upon Palamau Raja. He was engaged at the time in setting matters with Pratap Singh Ujjania, a Rajput chieftain who held considerable territory in Bhojpur. Abdullah Khan Firoz Jung dispatched Muazzam Khan the Raja of Sasseram, in advance to clear the way and prepare a passage for his troops. After reaching to the small stream which lies at the foot of the Bhabulthan or Monatu Pass. Muazzam Khan was challenged by Raja Ghulam Husain, the Rohilla chief of the Kothi fort and a rebel. In a fierce fight that ensued between them, Muazzam was killed and his army was repulsed.[34] Thereafter the expedition against Pratap Chero was not taken up by Abdullah Khan. Lahori says that Abdullah Khan, the governor of Bihar did not take expedition against Pratap Chero, the son of Balbhadar Chero because he was engaged with Pratap Ujjania, the chief of Bhojpur. The Chero Raja did not pay any heed to the Mughal governor and even did not pay *Peshkash*. The description of L.R. Forbes is similar to Lahori's account. We did not find any expedition being sent against Pratap Ujjania during 1627-28. Mirza Rustam Safavi was the governor of Bihar during 1627-28 and not Abdullah Khan Firoz Jang. Raja Pratap *chero* succeeded to throne, after the death of his father, Medini Rai in 1634. So Medini Rai was the Chero Raja during 1627, not Raja Pratap. So it appears that the event which L.R. Forbes describes, took place in 1637 and not in 1627. (*Letter regarding the Mughal invasions of Palamau from L.R. Forbes, Esq. Extra Assistant Commissioner, Palamau, JASB 1871, p. 129-133*).

35 . *Badshahnama* II, op.cit., pp. 248-250.

According to Lahori, rulers of Palamau taking advantage of dense forest in their chieftaincy which were almost inaccessible and mountain fortress showed no sign of obedience to the governor of the *Suba* Bihar.[36] Shaista Khan informed the Emperor about the state of affairs. The emperor ordered him to drive away Pratap *Chero* and to clear the country from the enemy.[37]

Leaving charge of Patna to his son, Shaista Khan marched towards Palamau on 12th October 1641 alongwith Zabardast Khan, Atash Khan Dakhini and Sayyid Mirza, brother of Mukhtar Khan, at the head of 5000 horse and 15000 infantry, which included some troops of certain local chiefs. Before entering in the territory of Palamau, he organized his army in battle formation and marched on to Palamau in that order. The whole area was so hostile to the Mughal that when they halted at some place, to protect the camp from surprise attacks trenches were dug and earth work was completed around the camp. A large number of wood cutters were employed to clear the forest and widen the roads for the smooth movement of army. Inspite of all these precautions been taken the *Cheros* often succeeded in making surprise attacks on Mughal army.[38]

Clearing road blocks and repulsing surprise attacks the Mughal army succeeded in reaching close to the northern side of the fort of Palamau on 26th Jan., 1642. He pitched his camp on the bank of a river which flowed past the fort of Palamau. The *Cheros* launched several attacks on Mughal positions but they failed to push them back. But in the mean time in a surprise attack the imperialists occupied a hillock commanding the fort; and opened heavy artillery

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36. *Badshahnama* II, op.cit., pp. 248-49.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., p. 249.

fire on the rampants of the fort. Pratap became alarmed of this new development and sent a message to Shaista Khan with the offer of submission along with a *peshkash* of Rs. 80,000. He also promised to present himself before the governor at Patna. The terms offered by the *Cheros* almost fulfilled all the demands of the imperialists; moreover Shaista Khan was also anxious to end the war before the fast approaching rainy season. Therefore Shaista Khan immediately accepted the offer and returned to Patna on 12 Feb. 1642 after receiving the *Peshkash*.[39]

Although by offering very favourable terms to the Mughals, Pratap had succeeded in saving Palamau from plunder, but the people of Palamau were not happy. It appears that Pratap made no efforts to either pacify the common people or his chiefs. Lahori writes that the common people specially the chiefs were so unhappy with the policies of Pratap that they started making efforts to overthrow him. Dariya Rai and Tej Rai his peternal uncles came to Patna and met Itiqad Khan the governor of the *Suba* and sought his help in getting Pratap removed from the chieftaincy. They also promised to capture Pratap and hand him over to the governor. The governor, it seems, assured them of complete cooperation. Therefore, after returning from Patna, they imprisoned Pratap and Tej Rai assumed the charge of the chieftaincy. As soon as Itiqad Khan came to know of these development, he ordered Tej Rai to immediately send Pratap to Patna. Tej Rai, however, failed to comply the orders making false excuses.

Dariya Rai one of the close associates of Tej Rai became unhappy with him soon after he became head of the chieftaincy and along with some leading chiefs met Itiqad Khan and apprised him of the misdeeds of Tej Rai. They

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39 . *Badshahnama*, II, p. 250. Saleh Kamboh, *Amal-i-Saleh* II, pp. 345-46, *Shahjahanama*, op.cit., pp. 290-91.

requested him to dethrone him and help Dariya Rai to assume the headship of the chieftaincy. To show his fidelity to the Governor Dariya Rai offered to surrender Deogan to the Mughal authority.[40] Dariya Rai and the two commanders of the fort waited in person on Zabardast Khan, the Mughal commander, when he arrived to take possession of the fort, but only a section of the inhabitants of Deogan submitted although the imperial government promised to protect them. Soon after the transfer of the fort to the Mughals a large number of people rose in revolt, but they were suppressed by the imperialists.

The occupation of the Deogan fort gave the Mughals an strategic advantage for leading an invasion on Palamau. Zabardast Khan who was posted there strengthened the fortification of Deogan with more troops and huge provision. Inspite of his best efforts to win Itiqad Khan to his side, Darya Rai could not get the chieftaincy of Palamau. On the other hand the presence of Mughal troops at Deogaon provoked Tej Rai to launch an attack on Mughal position. He dispatched his *vakil* Madan Singh Thakurai alongwith some of his chieftains to attack Baoli Chewan[41] and detachments to expel imperialists. However in the battle fought with the Mughal forces the *Cheros* were defeated and they took to flight. Meanwhile the Bihar governor sent further reinforcements to the assistance of Zabardast Khan. He ordered 'Abdullah Khan Najm-sani, *Bakshi* of Bihar, to march towards Palamau with Dariya Rai and also promised to join him as soon as possible.[42]

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40. A village situated in the extreme north-east of the district. It contains the remains of an interesting old fort of the *Cheros*. It was once a flourishing town with 52 streets and 53 *bazars* (Palamau District Gazetteers, vol. IX, LSS O'Malley, Calcutta, pp. 152-53).

41. A *mauza* which lies about ten miles south of Deogan.

42. *Badshahnama* II, p. 358, *Shahjahanama* Op.cit., *Amal-i-Saleh* II, p. 398.

About the same time, according to Lahori, Surat Sen and Sabal Sen, sons of the *vakil* Madan Singh Thakurai, taking advantage of the absence of Tej Rai from the capital who had gone on an hunting expeditions reinstated Pratap as the ruler of Palamau.[43] The change was so sudden that Tej Rai and his followers could hardly do anything to retrieve the situation. But it is really surprising that Tej Rai left the fort on a hunting excursion at a time when the Mughals were advancing towards Palamau at the instigation of Dariya Rai. Zabardast Khan also marched to Palamau in support of the invading army. Pratap (who was already reinstated as chief) realized that in the given situation he was in no position to offer resistance, to the Mughal army. Therefore he approached Zabardast Khan and offered him his submission. Zabardast Khan insisted on his submission before the governor of Patna. After some hesitation the *Chero* chief agreed to present himself before the governor but demanded an assurance of personnel safety from Zabardast Khan. To assure him, Zabardast Khan accompanied Pratap to Patna and on reaching there presented him before Itiqad Khan.[44]

Pratap *Chero* presented Itiqad Khan an elephant and a *Peshkash* of 100,000 rupees. Itiqad Khan was much pleased with the offering of Pratap and sent a favourable report to the Emperor. He also recommended that Pratap may be given a *mansab* of 1000/1000. The *jama* of Palamau was fixed at 250,000 rupees (one crore dams) and the entire area of Palamau assigned to him as his *tuyul*[45] (March, 1644).

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43 . L.R. Forbes write that Tej Rai now changed his mind and was determined to return to his allegiance to Pratap Rai after a prolonged intervene feud with Dariya Rai. This fact has got no support in the imperial chronicles (op.cit., JASB, 1871, p. 131).

44 . *Badshahnama* II, pp. 359-60. *Shahjahanama*, op.cit., pp. 308-9. *Amal-i-Saleh* II, 398.

45 . *Badshahnama* II, pp. 261, *Shahjahanama*, op.cit., pp. 309. *Amal-i-Saleh* II, 398.

J.N. Sarkar says that the tribute fixed by the Mughals at the end of the second Palamau campaign was exorbitant and that it was beyond the capacity of the Raja to pay it regularly.[46] The state naturally fell in arrears and relations with the imperial authority started deteriorating. Besides that the cattle raids of the *Cheros* across Bihar frontier further complicated the situation. Sarkar adds that these evils increased during the war of succession.[47] However in Persian chronicles from 1643 to 1660 we do not find any reference of the *Cheros* which seems that Raja Pratap did not pay the *Peshkash* regularly. But surprisingly no action was taken against Pratap.

In 1660 Aurangzeb ordered Daud Khan, the governor of Bihar to conquer the territory of Palamau.[48] On the receipt of the imperial order Daud Khan marched towards Palamau in March 1661 at the head of a large army along with important military commander such as Mirza Khan, *Faujdar* of Darbhanga, Tahawwur Khan, *Jagirdar* of Chainpur and Raja Bahroz *zamindar* of Monghyr. There were two strong forts in the vicinity of the town of Palamau, one on a neighbouring hill and the other on the plain. A big river flowed below the two forts. The forts were also surrounded by lofty hills and dense forest. Three other forts were close to the borders of the province of Bihar, viz. Kothi fort, which was at a distance of about 50 miles from Palamau, the second fort Kunda, which

46. Palamau is incomparably less fertile and smaller in cultivable area. Pratap heritage had been reduced by the cession of a productive tract in the north-east corner to the Mughals (in 1643) and much of his territory was hold on service tenure, yielding no revenue in cash or grain. Under the British, the current demand of land revenue (1905) is only Rs. 109,000 (Gaz. 139). But in 1643 the gross revenue of Palamau, to be collected by the *Rajah* had to pay nearly half of his income to the paramount power and could not have possibly maintained himself and his retainers much less kept state, on the balance, unless the standard assessment was collected every year without fail, which was never the case in such a primitive and sterile country. Subject to the calamities of the reasons (*History of Aurangzeb*, vol. III, p. 38).

47. Jaduath Sarkar, op.cit., p. 38.

48. For the conquest of Palamau see *Alamgirnama*, 649-660.

was about 18 miles from the Kothi fort to the eastward, and the third Deokan or Deogan fort which was at a distance of about 25 miles from the Kothi fort to the westward. Daud Khan decided to capture the Kothi fort first. He arrived in front of that fort on 24th April. The *Cheros* being alarmed by the news of a huge army marching against them, evacuated the fort and fled long before the arrival of Daud Khan. The fort was thus captured without a fight. Daud Khan after making arrangements for the protection of the fort marched towards Kunda. The fort was built on the top of a hill, and was sufficiently equipped with all necessary weapons of defence. Though the distance from the Kothi to this fort was only 20 miles, yet the route lay through dense forest, and about half of the way passed through a narrow defile over a high ridge. After forest were cleared Daud Khan marched towards Kunda. As soon as the enemy came to know of the movement of army towards the fort, they became frightened and abandoned the fort. Daud reached at the fort on 23rd May 1660 and occupied it without any opposition and completely dismantled it, so that in future it could not become the seat of disorder.

As the rains had set in by this time, Daud Khan decided to stay at Kunda, till the end of the rainy season. But to protect his army from surprise attacks of the *Cheros* and to keep raods safe for the regular supply of provision, Daud Khan built mud fort at a distance of every 7 or 8 miles and garrisoned them with 100 horsemen together with musketeers and troops of *zamindars*.[49]

After the end of the rainy season, Daud Khan made preparations to attack and storm Palamau. Having come to know of the movement of Mughal army,

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49. *Alamgirnama* op.cit. 648-51, Mohd. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* ed. Agha Ahmad Ali, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1871 pp. 37-38.

Pratap approached Daud Khan and offered to accept complete subordination of the Mughal and also agreed to pay annual tribute regularly provided he withdrew his invading army from Palamau. Daud Khan did not accept the proposals and continued his march towards Palamau. He organized his army in battle formation as soon as he reached close to Palamau. The commander of the vanguard was given to Mirza Khan and the left and right wings were give to the charge of Tahawwur Khan, Shaikh Tatar and Raja Bahroz respectively. Daud Khan himself commanded the centre and five hundred horsemen of his own contingent formed the rear guard. A large number of wood-cutters were engaged in charge of imperial officers and the Khan's own men were ordered to clear the forest and make a road to Palamau, so that the enemy might not have cover to lay ambush and harass the army on march. Posts were also established all along the route and garrisoned with troops. The army moved slowly because clearing of forest and building roads used to take lot of time. They could cover above about 20 miles in 9 days.[50]

On 23rd October 1661, they reached the village Loharsi[51] from where the fort of Palamau was at a distance of 17 or 18 miles, and encamped there. On the arrival of the invading army at this place, Raja Raja Pratap became alarmed, and sent his trusted and confidential *vakil* Surat Singh, to Daud Khan with an offer of not only of complete subordination to the imperial authority but also an assurance of continued cooperation with the governor of Bihar. Raja Bahroz was

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50 . *Alamgirnama*, pp. 651-653.

51 . The printed Persian text (*Alamgirnama*, p. 653) has Narsi, corrected in the index as Tarhasi, Blochmann takes it to be Tarhasi – Mangarh (*JASB*, vol. XL, Pt. I, 1871), name which I have not been able to trace on the map. I read Loharsi (Incl. At. Shet 104) which is 12½ miles S.S.W. of Koonda. Kuthi is given in Renell's Atlas, sheet 8, as Kooty. In the Indian Atlas, 104, the position corresponds to that of Fort 6 miles south of Imamganj, at the junction of the Chotko and Morhur rivers (*History of Aurangzeb* op.cit., pp. 41-42).

also won over by him to intercede with the Khan. Raja Pratap further offered to pay one lakh of rupees as *Peshkash* to the emperor, and half a lakh to Daud Khan. The latter reported the offer to the imperial court and waited for emperor's reply. Meanwhile he received information that about 17 or 18 miles from his encampment the enemy had attacked and plundered a convoy of provisions for the army. Although Pratap apologized for this act through his *vakil*, and asserted that it had been committed without his knowledge or instructions and immediately sent Rs. 50,000 out of the promised *Peshkash* to appease Daud Khan but the latter refused to accept his plea and decided to take action.[52]

He ordered his army to march forward and pitched his camp near the post of Palamau. On 29th Nov. *Cheros* came out of the fort to resist any further advance of the imperial army. About the same time Daud received Emperor's reply wherein the Emperor had agreed to accept the proposal of the *Chero* chief only on the condition of his conversion to Islam. Daud Khan communicated this order of the Emperor to the chief, and waited for his reply. But the invading army was impatient to fight, and reluctant to sit idle. On 24th December, Tahawwur Khan Barlas who was leading the campaign was so impatient to fight that he launched an attack on the *Chero*. When Daud came to know of attack, he also moved forward to reinforce Tahawwur Khan's advance guard. A pitched battle was fought for the whole day and a number of soldiers of imperial army were killed. After the sun set they returned to their camps. In the dead of night, the *Cheros* brought up two cannons from the fort, and began to bombard the imperial army. As Daud's troops were on lower ground, they suffered heavy casualities. Next morning Daud Khan launched a series of attacks on the *Chero*'s

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52 . *Alamgirnama*, pp. 653-55.

position but could not achieve much success because of the enemy positions were located on the top of neighbouring hills. However after putting in much efforts Daud Khan ultimately succeeded in positioning some of his guns on the hill and bombard the *Chero*'s lines more effectively. It had desired effect; the *Cheros* began to lose courage, and retreated further back, entrenching themselves on the bank of the river that flowed by the side of the fort. The road from Daud Khan's encampment to this entrenchment lay through thick forests. Two or three days were spent in having the forest cleared. When the road became passable for troops, Daud advanced and attacked the *Chero*'s positons. The battle lasted for about 6 hours. Many gallant deeds were performed by Daud's troops. Ultimately the *Cheros* were defeated and suffered heavy casualties. Those who were able to save their life took refuge into the fort. Without waisting any time and taking advantage of the great victory which his troops have achieved, Daud Khan launched an attack on the fort. The *Cheros* were taken by surprise by sudden attack and in the face of total defeat they retreated to the lower fort and the hill entrenchments. The provisions and other valuables stored in the fort were also brought to the lower fort. He sent away all his women and children into the forest but believing in the impregnability of the position, he himself stood his ground with a band of trusted followers. He fought with dogged courage and resolution. The imperialists, however, broke through the outer fortifications and entering the town, reached the gate of the fort and stormed it. The fight raged furiously till three hours of night, had passed when the besieged began to give way and chieftain himself escaped through a gate leading into the forest. Both the forts were thus captured by the invading army and the whole country was brought under subjugation. In this fight 61 men of the

invading force were killed, and 177 wounded. The casualties on the otherside were very heavy. After a few days the Scouts brought in the news that the *Cheros* had regrouped, entered the Deogan fort, and were making preparations to give a fight again. Daud deputed Shaikh Safi with a detachment of troops to crush them. The latter pushed on with all speed toward Deogan and besieged the fort. The *Cheros* abandoned it in a panic and fled.[53]

The invasion sounded the death knell of the *Chero* kingdom. Palamau was directly placed under the Governor of Bihar. The *Cheros* outposts at Kothi and Kunda were taken away from them; their capital lay in dust and desecrated. Their defeat was complete. It also marked the beginning of the growing dissension among different power groups the *Chero* Raja, his agents (Babuans) and their Rajput Diwans (Thakurais). *Chero* chiefs no doubt slowly recovered from the defeat, but their recovery was never complete. The invasion was also unique in the sense that it formed the subject of a painting, representing the siege and capturing the fort of Palamau in which costumes were very well lit off; the Palamau chiefs and their army were drawn in painting as hill-men with bows and arrows. The map, now preserved in the Mannulal Library at Gaya, as graphic.[54]

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53 . *Alamgirnama*, op.cit.

54 . "The *Chero* Raja's fort, drawn rather elaborately in plan, comes next, and the picture ends in a map of great wooded hills, into which the Raja retreated. The *Chero* boost is for the most part portrayed, holding its ground, but in sad plight between the hills from which they had been dislodged and the river. The *Chero* cavalry were evidently posted in the bed of the river, a very respectable body, as well mounted as their foes; but many are galloping up and down the sands of the river in a purposeless manner, some badly wounded. They are all with one or two exceptions of fair complexion and dressed as Hindustanis; and amongst the *Chero* foot soldiers there are a number of fair-complexioned and well dressed men, showing that in those days, as at present, there was a considerable sprinkling of Aryans amongst the Palamau population. But the majority are black with only a loin cloth, and bare heads and bare feet, bows as above described with only one curve and plenty of arrows, besides which some have spears, and some swords and some shields. The proportion of the matchlock-men to bow-men is small, but even the imperialists are shown to have more of the latter than of the former. The artist has not altogether failed to grasp some of the ethnic characteristics of the Palamau aborigines. The black men have all receding chins and foreheads, and are probably Kharwar (or *Cheros*). Daud's flank movement was apparently the only piece of strategy employed. Strong as he was in cavalry, he might have easily cut off the retreat of the Raja to the hills beyond the fort; but seems that his intelligence department was at fault. It is noticeable that the imperialist did not advance their guns when attacking the second position; they were left at their place and no field artillery was employed".

Daud Khan was honoured and rewarded by the imperial court. Many *zamindars* from various parts of Bihar who participated in the Mughal expedition against the *Cheros* were recognized for their role. Mahinath Thakur of Darbhanga displayed such valour in the course of the conquest of Palamau and Morang that he was given extensive *jagirs* in Monghyr and other parts of Bihar and Bengal.[55]

The history of the *Cheros* during the next sixty years is marked by internal feuds. Shitab Rai's account sheds[56] light on the history of Chotanagpur till the advent of the British. The Nagbanshi ruler is described as the overlord of the Palamau (*Chero*), Badam and Ramgarh *ghatwals*. The *ghatwali* system had by then been fully established. Many parts of Gaya (Sher, Sherghati), Hazaribagh (Karanpur, Kothi, Badam) and Palamau (Jabla, Belaunja, Deogan, Paloon, Surguja) were settled with Hindu and Mughal (Rohilla) *jagirdars*. The settlement effected by Bihari Das shows that the different estates fetched a revenue of Rs. 1,40,874. This included duties on the hill merchants (Rs. 4,000), which showed that the area was opened up for trade, and the *Peshkash* of the Palamau *jagirdari* was Rs. 4,140. The *Cheros* had not only lost their far flung territories such as Ser, Sherghati, Kothi and Sirguja but also the territories nearer their seat of power such as Deogan, Japla, Belaunja, etc.[57]

[W.W.Hunter, *The Statistical Account of Bengal*, vol. XVI (160, Hazaribagh and Lohardaga, pp. 464-8].

55 . Jatashankar Jha, *History of Darbhanga Raj*, p. 19, K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1966.

56 . Q. Ahmad, "A Historical Account of Chotanagpur in the 18th century by Shitab Rai', *Journal of Historical Research*, 1960, Vol. III, No. 1, Ranchi Univ.

57 . Ibid.

Social and Economic Condition of the *Cheros*

An interesting account of the *Cheros* and their way of life is available in the *Tawarikh-i-Ujjania* written about three hundred years after their power had been destroyed. The account though mainly based on family records of the *Ujjanias* contains interesting information.

The *Cheros* who lived in forests in tortuous conditions called themselves original masters of the region where they lived and ruled as rulers once upon a time. Their population was large, they were black in complexion, middle sized, rash and illiterate.

The administration of the state was run in accordance with age old tradition. They realized one-fourth of the produce in kind from the peasants and one eight of the forest produces (*anidhan dera*). They did not tax mango crop and fish. It appears that they took their share of the Mahua flowers. They did not know counting; therefore they kept in their houses big earthen vessels (*mataka*) filled with pieces of bricks to facilitate counting. Transactions (or exchange) were oral; there were no documents regarding loans counting was done by tying knots: small knots denoting advance of loan and big knots its realization.

They were good shots and hunters. They could trace out tigers from their footprints. No matter how a man moved, the arrow would not fall from his guiver (*chilla*). They shot arrows on targets (*Kamath*), lying down, which could hit wild animals two to three miles away.

Their food consisted of fruits (and probably forest produce such as tubers), vegetables such as *patal kohanra* which used to be roasted in fire and

eaten with honey. They consumed more of Mahua flower, and relished wine and roasted meat of animals.

They wore *dhoti*, *mirzai*, vest (*ganji*) and a turban of thick (*mota*) clothes. Their women wore ornaments of *kori* and *ghonghochi*. They carried a packet of tobacco in their waist, *kamath* and arrows, *khapri* or *kheri*, Palamau barrel gun, sword (*khanra*), spear (*Tega*), in their hands. Their weaponry included broad-blade *Jamdhar, sang ghagra*, *sakhi, sama* and axe (*tangi*). The *Cheros* extracted iron from rocks called *lohsan*. They used earthen lamps (*dia*), cooking utensils (*karahi*) bowl (*katora*).

They were devotees of *Devi*. Important sites of *Devi* worship are those of Bhagiri Devi in the forests of Jagadishpur, Jarvati *Bhavani* in village Bhalami and Taradevi in Sahasram hills. These sites were also the centers of fairs in the past. They also worshipped Koradhangr.

Cheros were good hosts. To this day in the hills to the south, the head of the house serves *chironji* and roasted meat with his own hands to the guest on the first day of his arrival. On the second day the guests are entertained in the normal course. They assembled on a high terrace covered with carpets (*farsh*) made of the forest grass. In those days forest produce and country-made thick clothes were popular. Different kinds of carpets (*Sitalpati*) *ghalicha* were made out of the sheep hairs.

Their marriage customs are interesting. Their settlements and those of Santhals exist in Palamau and Chotanagpur. They had no contact with the outside world or with any foreign power. The *Cheros* were mostly *rajas* in their localities.

At first, their population was large but they have deteriorated owing to their preoccupation with drinking and hunting.[58] The *Cheros* did not depend on pillage and brigandage' for building up their chieftaincy and keeping it going for well above two hundred years; their two surviving magnificent forts, the new fort is a fine piece of architecture and their tributes to the Mughal Emperor speak for a rather high stage of development and acculturation. They encouraged cultivation and settlements, particularly in the Orange-Amanat Valley which they opened up. Extension of cultivation and foundation of settlements were also twin conditions which were laid down in their areas. They constructed reservoirs (*ahars*) and they were particularly good at constructing wells of large diameter and cylindrical shape including underground wells (*Ba'ulis*), which still survive. The early accounts of Palamau in 1575 describe rich and fertile *tappas*: these constituted the source of agricultural surplus which the *Cheros* mopped up, they did in Shahabad at the rate of one-fourth of the crop produce and one-eight of the forest produce. Moreover the yields from Khas villages, and there were largely intact under the *Cheros* rulers till 1660 must have been substantial. They also collected taxes of a few cowries (*Cheros*'s currency and medium of exchange) per village, the customary *madad* from the peasants in kinds. They also started hats and fairs, some of which may have developed from tribal matrix, which served as outlets for such products as cotton for the territories extending as far as Surguja and Mirzapur. The existence of a *Chero* township and of a large colonies of traders and merchants pointed to significant commercial activities.[59]

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58 . K.S. Singh, *the Chero*(MS)

59 . K. Suresh Singh, *A study in state formation among Tribal community*', R.S. Sharma and Vivekanand Jha (ed) *Indian Society : Historical Probings in Memory of D.D. Koshambi*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1974.

Chapter - V

THE KHOKHRA CHIEFTAINCY

In the Chotanagpur region of Jharkhand lay a very important chieftaincy of Khokhra. Abul Fazl however locates it between Orissa and the Deccan.[1] The author of *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* calls the entire area of the chieftaincy as *Khokhradesh.*[2] The area under their control was very large and because of dense forest and rugged mountainous region almost inaccessible.[3]

Khokhra was ruled by *Nagbansi* dynasty from ancient times and their capital was at Sutiambay[4] during Phani Mukut Rai (the first chieftain of the Khokhra). After some time it was transferred to Chutia[5] and then to Kokhra itself during 1098-1113 AD.[6] The origin of the *Nagbansi* dynasty is shrouded in mystery. But it seems that originally the *Nagbansi* of Khokhra belonged to Kawardha region (in Madhya Pradesh) and after being overthrown by the Gonds during the fourteenth century, they migrated to Chotanagpur where they succeeded in carving out an independent kingdom. Their connection to Kawardha *Nagbansi* is confirmed by the fact that both shared the Phani (serpent) symbol.[7] However as mentioned above, the

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1. *Akbaranama* III, p. 479.
2. *Mirza Nathan, Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* tr. M.I. Borah, Guwahati, pp. 257-58.
3. H. Blochmann, "Notes from Muhammadan Historians on Chotia Nagpur, Pachet and Palamau", *JASB*, 1871, p. 111.
4. A village 10 miles north of Ranchi.
5. A village on the eastern part of Ranchi.
6. Mathura Ram Ustad, "Akbar and Jahangir's attraction in the Diamonds of Kokhra" *PIHC* 57th Session, 1996, Madras, pp. 392-393.
7. S.H. Askari and Q. Ahmad, *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, vol. II Pt. I, p. 281. According to a legend it is said that the Raja of Chotanagpur, Phani Mukut Rai was the son of Pundarika Nag (a snake god). One day the wife of Pundarika Nag discovered the truth of his husband as

geneology of the Nagbansi was traced back to the 1st century A.D. but their definite history begins only from the 15th century.[8]

Phani Mukut Rai who was the first chief of the Khokhra Raj, claimed to be a *Kshatriya*. But recent researches have established that the *Kokhras* were Mundas and were adopted into Nagbansi tribe by their head Madra Munda.[9] Phani Mukut Rai is said to have ruled over Bathua, Hazen, Kherswan, Badin, Ramgarh, Changuriah, Gola Palani, Tori to Mankeri and Burmay.[10] During the historical period also they ruled over more or less the same area.[11] We hardly get any reference of *Kokhras* during the period of the Sultan of Delhi. During the Afghan rule also *Kokhras* are not referred in any of the contemporary Persian chronicles. Sher Shah Suri who had close relations with many of the local chiefs of Bihar also seems to have no contact with the Kokhra's chiefs. Apparently the main reason of their complete isolation from the authorities who ruled over Bihar was the remoteness of their principality. None of the ruling dynasties have reached to those areas.

The Mughal rulers Babur and Humayun have not been able to establish their hold over Bihar. Humayun had come into contact with some

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snake in the form of human being. After revealing his truth Pundarika Nag disappeared from the scene. His wife died in grief and shame. They left behind one little child. The little child brought up by Madra (a Manki of Sutiambay) alongwith his own son. He named the child as Phani Mukut Rai and appointed him as his successor because he was more capable than his own real son. Phani Mukut Rai became the Raja of Chotanagpur and adopted the symbol of Phani 'snake crowned' (M.G. Hallet, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers, Ranchi*, 1917, Patna, p. 24-25).

8. S.H. Askari & Q. Ahmad, *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, vol. II, Pt. I, p. 281.

9. *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers, Ranchi*, 1917, Patna, pp. 24-25.

10. B.P. Ambashthaya, *Bihar in the Age of the Great Mughal, Akbar (1556-1605)*. Patna, 1990, p. 251.

11. In his fifth Report, Grant writes that in 1781 Chotanagpur Raj was an elevated region which formed the part of South Bihar containing nearly 18,000 square miles (Firminger's Fifth Report, II, p. 433).

of the local chiefs of Bihar at the time of his contest with Sher Shah particularly after his defeat at Chausa. But further developments were cut short because of his expulsion from India.

After the accession of Akbar, serious attempts were made for the expansion and consolidation of the Mughal Empire in India. During the period of Uzbek revolt it was found that the rebels were strongly supported by the Afghans of Bihar and also by a number of local chiefs. Therefore after the suppression of revolt, the Emperor sent campaigns in Bihar to expel Afghans and bring local chiefs under subordination of the Mughals.

In the earlier chapters we have discussed the attempts made by the imperial authority in this direction in the course of the campaign led by Shahbaz Khan against the Afghans during 1585, the emperor also asked him to launch an attack on Kokhra.[12] It appears that Madhukar Rai the ruling Kokhra chief had refused to accept the overlordship of the Mughals because as Abul Fazl writes that Madhukar Rai ignored the imperial authority as his area being full of forest and mountains, was not easy to access. Shahbaz therefore marched into the Kokhra region and conquered it. A huge booty fell into his hand. Madhukar Rai submitted and agreed to pay *malguzari* (land revenue).[13] But no further details of the settlement have been discussed. What position did he enjoy vis-à-vis the Mughal administration is not made clear. However in 1590-91 the Raja Madhukar Rai was asked to serve alongwith his retainers in the imperial army.[14] Many Rajput land

12. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama* III, pp. 479-80, *Maasir ul Umara*, II, pp. 590-601.
13. Ibid.
14. *Akbarnama* III, p. 611.

holders of Bihar such as Sangram Singh of Kharakpur, Puran Mal of Gidhaur, Rupnarain Sisodiah and others joined Raja Man Singh. Yusuf Khan the ex-ruler of Kashmir alongwith Raja Madhukar Rai and others also led a force into Orissa by the way of Jharkhand.[15] They defeated the Afghans and some of the important Afghan rebels like Nasib, Lodi, Jamal, son of Qatlu and Jalal Khan Khaskhel were captured and handover to the Emperor in 1594. Madhukar Rai played very important role in this expedition against Afghans.[16] Madhukar Rai appears to have died in 1599 because we now get reference of a new chief of Kokhra known as Bairisal, who is said to have visited Delhi, and accompanied Emperor Akbar in many of his expeditions. The Emperor was pleased with his heroic deeds and rewarded him with a dress of honour and other valuable gifts.[17] The *Pargana* Sherghati was also conferred on him. After his return from the court Bairisal transferred his capital at Doisa.[18]

Sometimes in 1613 Bairisal rebelled. Neither the Persian sources nor any of the local sources tell us about the causes of the revolt. But from the reading of the *Baharistan-i-Ghayabi* it appears that the campaign was launched against Bairisal because he failed to fulfill the demand of the payment of a diamond weighing thirty *misqals* in *Peshkash.*[19] The campaign was led by Zafar Khan and he was on the verge of achieving victory when the news of the death of Islam Khan, the governor of Bengal forced him

15. *Akbarnama* III, p. 611
16. Ibid.
17. Raja Bairibal showed his bravery by breaking the chain of an elephant.
18. H. Blockmann, "Notes from Muhammadan Historians on Chutia Nagpur, Pachet and Palamau", JASB, 1871, p. 115.
19. Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghayki*, tr. M.I. Borah, Guwahati, pp. 257-58.

make a settlement with the Khokras to immediately proceed to Jahangirnagar to take charge of Bengal.[20] On his sudden withdrawl from the campaign the *Diwan*, the *Bakshi* and the *Waqiya Navis* of Bihar send a complaint to the emperor stating that had Zafar Khan pressed the siege for a few days more Barisal would have been completely defeated and the diamonds weighing thirty *misqals* would also have been rescued.[21] The emperor was much displeased with Zafar Khan and ordered him to immediately return to Bihar and proceed against *Khokharas* without any further delay. Soon after returning to Bihar, Zafar Khan started making preparations to relaunch an attack on the Khokhra but he was struck with serious illness which paralysed half of his body and the campaign was given up. Although on receiving the information of Zafar Khan's illness the Emperor sent two physicians from his personal staffs for his treatment but Zafar Khan could not recover to take up the campaign.[22]

Sometimes in 1614 Barisal died after a rule of fourteen years.[23] He was succeeded by his son Durjan Sal. It appears that soon after his succession, Durjan Sal also continued to defy imperial authority and had not paid the arrears of *paishkash*. Ibrahim Khan the governor of Bihar invaded Khokhra to recover arrears of tribute. As it was a surprise attack Durjan Sal was not able to make preparations to defend himself. He was not only defeated completely but also taken prisoner by the imperial army and his

20. *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, op.cit., pp. 257-58.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. H. Blockmann, "Notes from Muhammadan Historians on Chutia Nagpur, Pachet and Palamau", *JASB*, 1871, p. 115.

chieftaincy was annexed in the empire (1615).[24] All the diamonds found at Kokhra were sent to the Mughal Court.[25] In *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* Jahangir has given an interesting description about this campaign. He writes,

> "The third piece of news was the conquest of the province of Kokhra and the acquisition of the diamond mines, which were taken by excellent efforts of Ibrahim Khan. This province is one of the dependencies of the *suba* of Bihar and Patna. There is a river from which they procure diamonds. At the season when there is little water in the river (*sankh*) then the people who are employed for mining the diamonds, involved in this work. There are crowds of fish which in the language of India, are called *Jhinga*. Keeping the bed of stream in sight as far as it is accessible, they (the people skilled to procure diamonds) make a collection of stones round the water holes. After this they empty the water holes with spades and shovels to the extent of a yard or 1½ yards and dig up the area. They find among the stones and sand large and small diamonds and bring them out. Its occasionally happens that they find a piece of diamond worth 50,000 rupees. Briefly, this province and this river were in possession of a Hindu *zamindar* of the name of Durjan Sal and although the governors of the *Suba* frequently sent armies against him and went there themselves in consequence of the difficult roads and thickness of the jungles they contended themselves with two or three diamonds and left him in his former condition. When the aforesaid *suba* was transferred from Zafar Khan and Ibrahim Khan was appointed in his place at the time of taking his leave, I ordered him to go and take the province out of the possession of the unknown and insignificant individual. As soon as he arrived in the province of Bihar, he assembled a force and went against that *zamindar*. According to custom, he sent some of his men with a promise to give some diamonds and some elephants but the Khan did not agree to this and

24. H. Blockmann, "Notes from Muhammadan Historians on Chutia Nagpur, Pachet and Palamau", *JASB*, 1871, p. 115.
25. *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, tr. M.I. Borah, Guwahati, vol. I, p. 419.

> entered impetuously into the province. Before the fellow could collect kinsmen he found guides and invaded it just when the *zamindar* received this news that his abode were be leaguered. Ibrahim Khan sent men to find him and they get hold of him in a cave with several women, one of whom was his mother, while others were also father's wives. They arrested him and also one of his brothers. They searched and took from them, the diamonds they had with them twenty three male and female elephants also fell into Ibrahim's hands. In reward for this service the *mansab* of Ibrahim Khan was made up to 4000 and he was exalted with the title of Fath Jang. Orders were also given for an increase in the *mansabs* of those who accompanied him on this service and had shown bravery that province is now in possession of the imperial servants of the state. They carry on work in the bed of the stream and bring to court whatever diamonds are found. A large diamond, the value of which has been estimated at 51,000 rupees has lately been brought from there".[26]

Raja Durjan Sal was taken to Delhi and then to Gawalior fort where he remained imprisoned for several years. In is memoirs Jahangir writes, "even three years after the conquest of Kokrah, the *zamindar* is still in prison".[27]

Sometimes afterwards Raja Durjan Sal was freed. The circumstances of his release from prison are discussed in detail by Jahangir in his memoirs:

> "the diamonds which Ibrahim Khan had brought from Kokrah had been given to the grinders. They were now submitted to me and among them there is one which looks like a sapphire (*nilam*, the same as *nilmani*). I have not seen a diamond of a such colour. It weighs several surkhs (ratis), and my lapidaries fix its value at 3000 rupees, though they would give

26 . *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 155.

27 . Ibid., p. 236.

> 20,000 for it, if it were quite white and stood the full test".[28]

Although, the jewellers tested the two diamonds which were brought to the emperor, they declared the best of them to be impure and the impure diamonds to be sound. Therefore Raja Durjan Sal was recalled from the prison to judge the diamonds. He pointed out the flaw and to prove that he was right, he tied the diamonds to the ends of the horns of a ram and made the animal fight with another ram. When the diamond with the flaw split, and the bal became apparent. The other diamond remained uninjured. The Emperor was so pleased that he pardoned Raja Durjan Sal and released him.[29] On being released, the Raja also begged that other Rajas who were confined in the Gwalior fort alongwith him should also be released. He also requested that his former position might be restored to him, including the right to sit on a chair in the presence of the emperor. These requests were fulfilled. Blochmann quoting family records adds that the Raja of Kokrah agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 6000 and the title of *Shah* was also conferred on him.[30]

After his release from prison, Raja Durjan Sal came to Kokrah, but he found that one of his relatives had taken the possession of Khokhra chieftaincy. Therefore to expel the usurper he launched an attack and succeeded in re-establishing himself his lost position. In the fight he was assisted by one of the Rajas who had accompanied him from Gwalior. Durjan Sal turned his capital Deosa into a magnificent fort city and

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28. Ibid.
29. H. Blochmann, op.cit., pp. 115-116.
30. H. Blochmann, op.cit., pp. 115-116. From beginning, the title of Raja of Kokhra was '*Rai*' but from 29trh to 44th Rajasi title was '*karn*'.

introduced the feudal system of administration. Attracted by the land assignment given by him, many individuals and communities flocked to Chotanagpur. Afterwards the Nagbanshi rulers, unlike the Chero, maintained cordial relations with the Mughal empire.[31]

But it is really surprising that after Durjan Sal we practically get no reference of any other Khokhra chief in any of the contemporary or later sources. In the whole period of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb *Khokharas* are not referred. In the earlier chapters we have seen that in the war of succession among the sons of Shahjahan a number of *zamindars* of Bihar sided with one or the other prince, but even during this campaign, *Khokhras* are nowhere to be found.

However in a local source there is a reference of a Khokhra chief named Raja Raghunath ruling in 1665-66.[32] His name also figures in a temple inscription at Chutia as a 50^{th} descendent from Raja Phani Mukta. Khokharas however became quite important by the end of the century.

31 . *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, vol. II, Pt. I, p. 282.
32 . H. Blochmann, op.cit., p. 117.

Chapter – VI

GIDHAUR CHIEFTAINCY

Gidhaur chieftaincy was one of the oldest ruling family of Bihar.[1] In the *Ain-i-Akbari* it is mentioned as a *Mahal* of *sarkar* Bihar.[2] Presently it is a village and a police station in the Jamui subdivision of Munghyr district[3] and lies nine miles south-east of Jamui.[4]

The founder of Gidhaur chieftaincy was Bir Bikram Shah of the Chandel sept of Chandrabansi Rajputs.[5] According to family accounts his ancestor were holding a small chieftaincy in Mahoba in Bundelkhand. But during 12th century they were driven out from there due to Turkish incursion.[6] After being expelled from central India, they succeeded in establishing their principalities in Bijaygarh, Agrohi-Barkar in Mirzapur district and Baroli in the present Rewa district.[7] But a few generation later, Bir Bikram Shah, a younger brother of the chief of Baroli, left his home and came to Deogarh near Gidhaur and established his hold over the region after expelling Nagoria the chief of Dosadh, an aboriginal tribe (1262).[8]

Bir Bikram Shah initially had control over only the nearby areas of Gidhaur. But later on he extended his chieftaincy further west into more fertile region which came to be known as Gidhaur. He built there a large fort

1. *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Einme to Gwalior*, new addition (Oxford, 1908) vol. XII, p. 237.
2. *Ain-i-Akbari*, p. 418.
3. O'Malley, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers, Monghyr*, pp. 209.
4. *Imperial Gazetteers*, op.cit.
5. O'Malley, op.cit.
6. O'Malley, op.cit., pp. 209-210.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

called *Naulakhagarh* alongwith some other buildings. The chieftaincy included Malda region also. Sukhdev Singh, the son of Bikram Singh succeeded to the throne and built his capital at Kakeshwar, four miles, east of Gidhaur.[9] He died in 1339. Thereafter we get references of a number of chiefs of Gidhaur such as Deva Singh, Ram Naranjan Singh, Raj Singh, Darp Narayan Singh and Raghunath Singh.[10] But Raghunath Singh was the first chief about whom we get reference in a near contemporary account. Abbas Khan Sarwani informs us that Raghunath Singh accepted the subordination of Sher Shah (although details are not mentioned) and during Sher Shah's war with Humayun, Raghunath Singh performed very useful service. Sher Shah deputed him to escort the family of Saif Khan (who had risked his life to check the advance of Humayun towards Bengal) from Mungher. However, we are not provided with any further dedtails of his activities. We are only informed that shortly afterwards he died and his son Bariar Singh succeeded to the Gaddi and ruled till 1572 when he also expired. Puran Mal the son and successor of Bariar Singh was a contemporary of emperor Akbar. *Akbarnama* mentions that Puran Mal offered his submission before Munim Khan soonafter his conquest of Surajgarh and Munghyr. He joined the Mughal army and accompanied Munim Khan in his campaign against the Afghans of Bengal.[11] But the details of the nature of his submission are not given by any of the contemporary accounts.

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9. *Bihar and Orissa District Gazeteers*, op.cit.
10. B.P., Ambashthya, *Bihar in the Age of the Great Mughal Akbar (1556-1615)*, K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, p. 155.
11. Ibid.

To the next few years we do not notice any reference of Puran Mal in Persian chronicles. But during 1580-81 Puran Mal openly rebelled and joined the rebels, Masum Khan Kabuli and his supporter. He further adds that Puran Mal rescued Masum Khan Kabuli with his supporters from Munghyr where they were trapped by the imperial army. Beside that we also did not get any reference of his activities in the Bengal campaign and even afterwards. In the account of 1580-81 when the rebellion broke out in eastern provinces, Abul Fazl writes that Puran Mal took the advantage of this rebellion of the imperial officers and threw the loyalty of the Mughals and helped the Afghan rebels.

During 1585-86, we find Puran Mal serving Shahbaz Khan, the Mughal commander in his expedition against the Afghans.[12] Raja Sangram Singh of Kharagpur who was neighbouring chief of Puran Mal, was also helping Shahbaz Khan at the same time. Raja Sangram Singh and Puran Mal were the bitter enemies of each other on account of some family feuds.[13] However Puran Mal was successful to winover the favour of Shahbaz Khan and with his support inflicted a defeat on Sangram Singh. Sangram Singh was forced to take shelter in the near forest. Puran Mal became quite powerful in the whole region after his victory over Sangram Singh., But soon after an unfortunate incident suddenly changed the whole situation in favour of Raja Sangram Singh.[14] A Rajput retainer who was in the service of Puran Mal, left him and joined Sangram Singh. The Rajput retainer plotted to kill Shahbaz Khan and murdered another person mistaking him to be

12. *Akbaranama III*, 460-61.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 461.

Shahbaz Khan. When Shahbaz Khan came to know the incident, he became suspicious of Puran Mal and immediately imprisoned him. Although Puran Mal was not involved in it, and as soon as Puran Mal came to know the incident he got the assailant killed to prove his innocence, but he lost the confidence and favour of Shahbaz Khan.[15] But soonafter Shahbaz Khan was transferred to Bengal and Mirza Yusuf Muhammad Khan Mashadi was dispatched from Amadh to take charge of Bihar.

Again for sometimes Raja Puran Mal remained loyal to the Mughals but he rebelled against the imperial authority during 1590-91. Abul Fazl informs us that out of ego, pride and confident of the strength of his fort, Puran Mal defied the Mughal authority.[16]

Raja Man Singh who had been appointed the governor of Bihar in 1587, led an expedition against Raja Puran Mal. He captured his forts and plundered his territory. Puran Mal came forward with his apologies and submitted to Raja Man singh. He presented some elephants and valuables. He also gave his sister in marriage to Chandrabhan, the brother of Raja Man Singh.[17] After that Raja Puran Mal remained loyal to the Mughals during his own period of rule.

In the 37 r.y. (1592-93) Raja Puran Mal served the Mughals. He alongwith Madhu, Lakhi Rai, Koka, Rup Narain Sisodiah and others went under the charge of Yusuf Khan Kashmiri to fight against the Afghans in Orissa alongwith imperial forces led by Raja Man Singh.[18] In this operation

15. *Akbarnama* II, pp. 460-61.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., p. 611.

a number of important Afghan rebels such as Nasib, Lodi, Jamal, sons of Qutbe and Jalal Khan Kakshal etc. were captured and were handed over to the Emperor.[19] In this campaign against Afghans, Raja Puran Mal proved to be very useful for the Mughals.

We do not find the reference of Puran Mal with the Mughals in Persian chronicles. But according to family accounts, Puran Mal had two sons, Hari Singh and Bisambhar Singh. Hari Singh was kept at Delhi as a hostage for the good conduct of Puran Mal.[20] When Hari Singh returned from Delhi, he was given the Pargana of *Bishazari*. After his return, Hari Singh found Bisambhar Singh on the throne of Gidhaur. A settlement was made between the two brothers. Hari Singh got ninth part of Gidhaur chieftaincy and seventh part of *Bishazari* pargana while the rest was retained by Bisambhar Singh. Hari Singh became the chief of Gidhaur Raj while Bisambhar Singh found another seat at Khaira.[21]

We find a long gap in the relation between Gidhaur chieftaincy and the Mughals. Apart from lacking information about the accounts of Gidhaur chieftaincy during Shahjahan, it also appears that the chiefs of Gidhaur were on peace with the Mughals for a long time. During the reign of Shahjahan were find the reference of Dulan Singh (Dal Singh in Mughal *farman*), the fourteenth Raja. It seems that Raja Dulan Singh remained loyal to the Mughals as well as supported the Mughal authority in Bihar. The Emperor Shahjahan conferred on him the title of Raja in 1651.[22]

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19 . *Akbarnama* III, p. 611.
20 . *Bihar* and *Orissa District Gazetteers*, op.cit., p. 210
21 . Ibid. It was a small estate near Gidhaur.
22 . Ibid.

During the war of succession, each of the two contesting sons of Shahjahan, Dara and Shuja tried their best effort to take the support of the local chiefs and in their endeavour of pursuance both wrote their respective *farmans* addressed to Raja Dulan Singh of Gidhaur, asking the later for help.

In the following *farman* Shuja has addressed to Raja Dal Singh of Gidhaur during 19th March 1658 A.D.[23]

> "The best of the peers and contemporaries, the highest among the equals and the grandees, Dal Singh (Dulan Singh) being hopeful of receiving the royal favours, may know that the fact of his unfailing sincerity and correct faith has come to the notice of the most Enlightened and the Highest through the attendants. This has rendered necessary the conferment of royal favours upon him (Dal Singh) since by the way of favour and for the satisfaction of the best of the contemporaries, I am sending the impression of the hand, he ought to proceed to the court of his exalted majesty with all his *sawars* (cavalry) and Payandah (infantry) which he may have at his disposal, so that he shall be raised and distinguished with royal favours. He should take up this matter with all seriousness and care and act in keeping with exalted order".[24]

According to *farmans* of Shuja it is clear that he is in desperate need of help from all sides. As he had been defeated by Sulaiman Shakuh at Bahadurpur near Benares on 14th February, 1658. He gave all assurance of favour to Raja Dal Singh to get his support in his war of succession.

In another *farman* Prince Dara Shikoh on behalf of emperor Shahjahan had addressed to Raja Dal Singh and sought his help. This *farman* was issued on 14th April 1658.[25]

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23. B.P. Ambashthaya, "Some Farmans, sanads, Nishans and Inscriptions in Bihar", *JBRS*, Vol. XLIII, Sept.-December 1957, Parts III & IV, pp. 224-225.
24. Ibid.
25. Some *Farmans, Sanads, Nishans* and Inscription in Bihar, op.cit., pp. 225-227.

> "The best among the grandees and the like beings, the great among the equals and the contemporaries, worthy of receiving favours and priviledges, Raja Dal Singh, the *zamindar* of Gidhaur, being duly honoured with royal gifts, may know that in the present time to message of Sulaiman Shikoh Bahadur, the able and the brave son, the fortunate and the well behaved, the all conquering and ever-fortunate by Lord's grace, the son of the ruling royal house, and of highest descent, having the blessings of God, the pearl of royal crown and of sublime Majesty, the star of sparkling wisdom and prudence, the cloud of showering generosity, privileges and power, ever-watering the flower of fortune, the all embracing all powerful prince expansive as sky, the good natured, reached (Dara Shikoh) that he (Dal Singh), the best among peers and contemporaries, under the guidance of the fortune, the faithful servant and the well-wisher of the empire, is treading the path of loyalty and would escort the royal force through his land against the cowardly and the disrespectful Shah Shuja who did not distinguished between right and wrong, and after duly punishing him (Shah Shuja), would drive him (Shah Shuja) out of Munger and its quarter and would thus force him to lead the life of adversity. This news proved highly agreeable to me (Dara Shikoh), and he (Dal Singh) was assured that in return for this service of his (Dal Singh's) he (Dal Singh) would have access to the presence of the emperor and would receive royal favours and rewards and a good *mansab* and a good title; if he (Dal Singh) would want to get held of the *Zamindari* of Kharakpur from the hands of the unfortunate Bahroz, I (Dara) would agree to it and that he (Dal Singh) might uproot him (Bahroz) and occupy his (Bahroz's) territory. He (Dal Singh) was directed to communicate his wish so that the emperor might actually announce the favour regarding him (Dal Singh), and my (Dara's) gifts would also continue in his favour in future".[26]

According to the *farman*, it appears that Raja Dal Singh of Girdhaur supported Dara Shikoh in his struggle against Shah Shuja. It also appears that Dara Shikoh was not happy with Raja Bahroz of Kharakpur because he

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26 . Some *Farmans, Sanads, Nishans* and Inscription in Bihar, op.cit., pp. 225-227.

was supporting Shah Shuja. As Dara Shikoh assured Raja Dal Singh that if he wished he could got the *zamindari* of Kharakpur Raj.

During Aurangzeb's reign, we are lacking the account of Gidhaur chieftaincy. It seems that the chiefs of Gidhaur remained submissive to the Mughals during Aurangzeb's period of rule. As it is also a fact that Aurangzeb was more focused to Deccan problems than any other problems.

Chapter – VII

DARBHANGA RAJ

The origin and the rise of the Darbhanga Raj is quite different from the history of other chieftaincies of Bihar. Mahesh Thakur the founder of Darbhanga Raj was granted the rights of *chaudhari* and *Qanungo* of Tirhut during the reign of Akbar. Later on the family received several other favours and extension in their superior rights from successive Mughal Emperors and by the time of Aurangzeb's reign they almost gained the position of autonomous chiefs. The title of Raja however was conferred on them only in 1720.

Darbhanga was one of the *Mahals* in the *Sarkar* of Tirhut during the reign of Akbar.[1] The ancient name of Darbhanga region is known as Mithila. Mithila was bounded on the north by the Himalayas and the rivers Kosi (Kausik), Ganga and Gandak on the east, south and west respectively[2] and comprised of the present districts of Muzaffarpur, Vaishali, Hajipur, Darbhanga, Madhubani, Sitamarhi, Saharsa, Champaran (East and West) and parts of Monghyre, Bhagalpur, Purnia in India and Morang Sapta Sara Labi, Rotahat, Vera and Parsa districts in Nepal.[3] The chieftaincy covered an area of more than 2000 square miles.[4]

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1. *Ain-i-Akbari.*
2. S.N. Singh, *History of Tirhut*, pp. 2-3.
3. R.N. Chaudhari, *Political History of Khandawala Dynasty in Mithila (1556-1793)*, Capital Publishing House, Deli-6, 1987, (ICHR), p. 1.
4. Stephen Henningham, "Agrarian Relations in North Bihar, Peasant Protest and the Darbhanga Raj, 1919-20", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, XVII,pp. 77.

Mithila has been a centre of high learning and culture through the ages. The region enjoyed very important position during the period of *Mahajanpadas* and the Mauryans. During the Gupta Age Mithila region was known as Tirabhuki which included both Vaishali and Mithila[5] but Mithila gained importance as a border province with Nepal and Tibet on the north and Kamrup on the east at the time of Harshavardhana. Till the coming of Karnatas[6], Mithila remained a dependency of one or other principal kingdoms. Karnatas established their political authority over Mithila region in about 1098 A.D.[7] They ruled till 1353 when they were supplanted by *Oinwaras*.[8] In 1527 Nasrat Shah invaded Tirhut and killed Kansanarayan, the last Oinwaras chief of Mithila and the Oinwaras dynasty came to an end. Soon after Mithila slipped into a period of chaos and confusion. Afghans exercised control over Mithila upto 1574 when it passed under the Mughals and thereafter the overall administration of Mithila fell in the hands of the Mughal Emperors.[9]

Mahesh Thakur, a Maithili Brahman, the founder of Darbhanga Raj, was one of the most learned scholars of the time. His ancestors have come from Mandala in the districts of Jabalpur (M.P.) in the beginning of the 16th century.[10] It appears that one of his ancestors Gosain Shankarshan Upadhayaya was granted a village of Khandwa (M.P.) and on account of

5. R.N. Chaudhari, op.cit., pp. 1-2.
6. Karnatas were the rulers of Mithila before Oinwara dynasty.
7. *Darbhanga District Gazetteer*, p. 15.
8. Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, ed. Maulvi Abdus Salam, Bib. Ind. Calcutta, 1890, p. 136.
9. Ibid.
10. Jata Shankar Jha, "History of Darbhanga Raj", *JBRS*, vol. XLVIII, Part I, 1962, p. 14.

holding landed property Shankarsan Upadhayaya, like other chiefs of that region also began to be called Thakur.[11]

It seems that after the conquest of Bihar, Mahesh Thakur approached Akbar, and apparently impressed him with his learning, the emperor appointed him as *chaudhari* and *Qanungo* of *Sarkar* Tirhut, and a *farman* was also issued in this connection. Although this *farman* is not available to us but a close study of the *farman* issued to Gopal Thakur son of Mahesh Thakur clearly indicates that a *farman* to Mahesh Thakur had been issued. The *farman* addressed to Gopal Thakur runs as follows[12]:

"Jalalluddin Muhammad Akbar *Badshah Ghazi*, *Khaludullah-o-mulkahu-wa-abadahu.*

> "Exalted *farman*, let it be known to the exalted officers and economy effecting functionaries, Mutasaddies of Diwani and Karories of *Sarkar* Tirhut, present and future that Ajit Thakur (Achutta Thakur) obedient to officers, brother of Gopal as, obedient to Islam, *Qanungo* and Chaudhari of the above mentioned *sarkar* having present himself in the court, the Refuge of Humanity .. submitted to the effect that the *qanungo* and *Chaudhari* of the said *sarkar* were assigned to the said Gopal Das and the said person during the life time of *Diwan* (no name is mentioned here) performed good service for the betterment of the ryots's condition. Therefore, the *farman* having (the same force of) in controvertibility as Death had the honour of being brought into existence (issued) that the *Chaudhari* and *Qanungo* of the entire above mentioned *sarkar* be restored to the said Gopal Das, obedient to Islam. It is expected out of his (sense of) profuse honesty and ability that he will put forth his best endeavours in looking after the interests of

11. Jata Shankar Jha, "History of Darbhanga Raj", *JBRS*, vol. XLVIII, Part I, 1962, p. 14.
12. Qeyamuddin Ahmad, "Origin and Growth of Darbhanga Raj (1574-1666)", *IHRC*, Vol. 31, 1961, pp. 89-90.

> *Diwani* and in protecting the lives of ryots and increasing their prosperity. And if he duly performed the said duty, he should realize from the ryots the *Rusum-i-Chaudharai* at 1 tanka per *bigha* and *Rusum-i-Qanungoi* at one-forth tanka per *bigha* totaling 1¼ tankas per *bigha* and from the same (torn in the original) find out the means to support himself.
>
> It is ordered that the *Muqaddams*, ryots and cultivators residing in the said *sarkar* should consider the above named person (without associating anybody else's name with his) as the official *Chaudhari* and *Qanungo* and should not go beyond (i.e. act contrary to) his orders and advices which are in accordance with equity and are conducive to the welfare and prosperity (of the ryots) and pay him without interruption the *Rusum-i-Chaudhari* and *Qanungoi*, as of old. They should not consider any one as sharing these powers with him. They should act as ordered and consider this as urgent".[13]

The date of this *farman* issued to Gopal Thakur appears to be around 11th June 1578. It seems that the *farman* of Mahesh Thakur must have been issued around 1575-76, because Akbar conquered Bihar in 1574.

Traditions however are at variance about how Mahesh Thakur was able to get a *farman* in his own favour.

In a Hindi work on the history of Mithila[14] a well known tradition in verse has been quoted which shows that Mahesh Thakur got the *farman* on the occasion of *ramnavmi* which generally falls in March-April every year.[15]

It is said that a learned Muslim had thrown a challenge to hold discussion on Hindu philosophy. Thereupon Raja Birbal suggested the

13 . Qeyamuddin Ahmad, op.cit., pp. 90-91.

14 . Bakshi Mukund Jha, *History of Mithila*, p. 59.

15 . B.P. Ambashthaya, *Bihar in the Age of the Great Mughal Akbar (1556-1605)*, K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, 1997, p. 71.

name of Mahesh Thakur and requested the emperor to invite him from the court of Gadha Katanga[16] kingdom where he had come into contact with him. So Mahesh Thakur was invited and he came to Fatehpur Sikri alongwith his disciple Raghunandan Jha. After his arrival at the court Mahesh Thakur and Raghunandan Jha were introduced to Emperor Akbar by Raja Man Singh. The Emperor was much pleased to talk to them and allowed Raghunandan Jha to enter into discussion with the learned Muslim. The discussion lasted for three days and Raghunandan Jha came out as winner. He was favoured with a *farman* conferring upon him the territory of Tirhut, a reward which he declined in favour of his *guru* i.e. Mahesh Thakur. As the *farman* had already been drawn up in the favour of Raghunandan Jha, so difficulties stood in the way of transferring it in favour of Mahesh Thakur. Ultimately on the intercession of the mother of the emperor, Raja Man Singh and Raja Birbal, a fresh *farman* was issued in favour of Mahesh Thakur.[17]

Although the original *farman* in the name of Mahesh Thakur is not available but its contents are noted in a *Mahzarnama* of Sundar Thakur dated 1652. The following is the English tranlation of the relevant portion of the *Mahzarnama*.[18]

16. Once Mahesh Thakur alongwith his pupil visited to Gadhakatanga to participate in religious discourse. The famous Rani Durgavati also took part in it. Raghunandan Jha somehow incurred the displeasure of the Rani and they left the palce (Jata Shankar Jha, op.cit., p. 15).

17. Mukund Jha, op.cit, pp. 56-58, According to Stephen Heningham, Mahesh Thakur sent his pupil Raghunandan Jha to the court. Jha won favour by warning that a tree overhanging the emperor's tent would get destroyed in a storm. The tent was moved to a safer location and a short while lightening felled the tree. Akbar conferred an income of two percent of the Tirhut revenues on Jha, who transferred the grant to Mahesh Thakur (Stephen Heningham, *A Great Estate and its landlords in Colonial India, Darbhanga (1860-1942)*, p. 18).

18. The *farman* has been quoted by Qeyamuddin Ahmad in his article "Original Growth of Darbhanga Raj", op.cit., pp. 92-93.

"I the humblest one, Chaudhari Sundar Thakur beseech from the venerable Syeds, Sheikhs, Qazis, Muftis and other persons living in the *Parganas* of *sarkar* Tirhut to testify to the truth of the fact that the *Chaudhari* of *sarkar* Tirhut, *Suba* Bihar and the *Qanungoi* of the *parganas* of *sarkar* Tirhut have been obtained by Mahesh Thakur from the court of Hazrat Jahanpanah (the refuge of the world). The said Thakur (Mahesh) in accordance with the exalted *farman* remained in occupation of *Qanungoi* and *Chaudhari.* The son of Mahesh Thakur also obtained a *farman* as of old. The said son Gopal, Ajit (Achyuta) and Parmananda were real brothers and Subhankar Thakur was (their) step brother (all being sons of Mahesh Thakur). Ajit died issueless. Gopal, Parmananda and Shubhankar the three brothers shared the *Chaudhari* and *Qanungoi.* Shubhankar Thakur possessed 1/3 share of 5 *annas* 6 *gandas* out of the proceeds of the full *Chaudhari* and *Qanungoi.* He had three wives; from the first he had Purusottam, from the second Narain and from the third Rhaghuram Thakur. His sons continued to hold his 1/3 share. Gunakar Thakur, son of Purusottam Thakur, and Hariram Thakur, son of Raghuram Thakur have sold their share in the name of Narayan Thakur, my elder brother and myself on account of (their inability to pay) the arrears of Governments revenue. We two also continue to possess our own share in it.

Out of the remaining 2/3 share one belonged to Gopal Thakur, our uncle and the other to Parmanand, the brother of Gopal Parmananda died issueless, both (the shares totaling 10 *annas* 14 (or 12) *gandas* developed on Hamanuk (Hemangad) Thakur, son of Gopal. In 1650 A.D. the *Qabuliyat* for the revenue of Tirhut had been tendered by all the three shares holders together in accordance with the order of the then (revenue) officer. Out of the total outstanding government dues of Rs. 31,500, Rs. 10,500 being the one-third share of the petitioners (Sunder and Narayan) was deposited, and Rs. 21,000 were due from Lakshman Chaudharai, Ratidhar Thakur, Jaeshwar Thakur (sons of Hemangad Thakur) who jointly held 2/3 shares of 10 *annas* 14 *gandas*. These persons could not make the payment, so they sold their full share of the *Chaudhari* and *Qanungo* totaling 10 *annas* and 14 *gandas* to me the

> petitioner, for Rs. 21,00 amount of government dues in 1652 and the said amount was deposited by me in the government treasury.[19]
>
> Anyone having the knowledge of these affairs is requested to put his signature on this paper. This servant of the people shall remain obliged for it".[20]

According to *Mahzarnama* Mahesh Thakur was originally appointed as *Sadar chaudhari* of Tirhut but owing to his failure to pay the government dues in time, he was demoted to the office of *chaudhari.* It seems that original appointment of *chaudhari* might have been upgraded sometimes after the grant of *farman* to Gopal Thakur.[21] According to *Mahzarnama* it also appears that the income from *Sarkar* Tirhut was divided among the various descendants of Mahesh Thakur, but later on by purchase, all the shares came into one hand. Mahesh Thakur had four sons; Gopal Achuta and Parmanand, were real brothers and Subhankar was their step-brother. Achyuta died soon without any son the remaining three brothers divided their ancestral property among themselves. Gopal and Parmanand continued to live together even after their separation with Subhankar. After sometime Parmanand died without heir, with the result that Gopal Thakur's son Hemangad Thakur got his uncle's share also. In this way Hemangad Thakur's sons Lakshman Chaudhari, Ratidhar Thakur and Jogeswar Thakur possessed 2/3 shares. In 1652, in accordance with the orders of the imperial government all the share holders together took the *Kabuliyat* of Sarkar Tirhut. But they could not pay the government dues of

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19. Qeyamuddin Ahnmad, op.cit.
20. The *farman* has been quoted by Qeyamuddin Ahmad in his article, "Origin and Growth of Darbhanga Raj", op.cit.
21. Jata Shankar Jha, "History of Darbhanga Raj", *JBRS*, Part I, Vol. XLVIII, p. 21.

Rs. 31,500. Of this sum, Rs. 21,000 were due on the three sons of Hemangad Thakur, who could not make the payment, and finding no way out the brothers sold their entire shares of *Chaudhari* and *Qanungo* for the said amount to Sundar Thakur in 1652.[22] The said amount of Rs. 21,000/- was deposited by Sundar Thakur in the government treasury. As Sundar Thakur acquired the *Sadar chaudhari* and *Qanungo* of Tirhut, he came to enjoy very high position in the region. Narayan Thakur and Sundar Thakur had already purchased the shares of their step brothers. They also received *nankar* grants of the villages like Sarson in *Pargana* Bhaur and Bijilpura in *Pargana* Berai from Emperor Shah Jahan. Darbhanga Raj came into prominence during the rule of Mahinath and Narapati, the sons of Sundar Thakur. Both Mahinath and Narpati had close contact with the imperial court. Emperor Aurangzeb was so much pleased with Mahinath Thakur that he granted him 110 *parganas* in *Suba* Bihar and Bengal. He was also given a *khilat* (a robe of honour) and *Mahi Maratib* (Fish insignia). The *farman* issued in this connection runs as follows[23]

> "Be it known to the Mutasaddis of *Mahals*, present and future, *Tiyuldars* (holders of *jagir* lands), *zamindars*, officers and *Nazims* of *Mustaqunar-ul Mulk*, Bihar and the paradise like province (*Jinnat-ul Balad*) of Bengal that since the news of the sincerity and good service of Mahinath Thakur (1667-87) son of Sundar Thakur, who is obedient to Islam and subservient to (local) officers in the conquest of the country of Palamau appertaining to *Suba* Bihar and in the suppression of the *Zamindars* of Morang[24] alongwith the late Nawab Mirza Khan, *Faujdar* of Darbhanga, has reached the exalted

22 . Subhankar Thakur had three sons from his three wives; from the first he had Pursotham from the second he had Narayan and Sundar Thakur, from the third Raghuram.

23 . Q. Ahmad, op.cit., pp. 94-95.

24 . The sub-Himalayan jungle tract on the North-Eastern border of Bihar was known as Morang.

presence; therefore, by way of grace and in order to honour (the grantee) the *sadr zamindari* and settlement of *sarkar* Tirhut alongwith the services of *zamindar*, *Milkiat*, *Chaudharai* and *Muqaddami* of *Parganas* Dharampur, *Sarkar* Farrukhabad alias Monghyr, pertaining to Bihar and the *zamindari* of *Pargana* Haveli, Purnea and Tajpur pertaining to Bengal and the *Chaudharai* and *Qanungoi* and *sarkar* Tirhut which (last two) belong to the grantee according to the *farman* of Hazrat Arsh Ashiyani, together with a *khilat* and *Mahi Maratib* are granted in heredity and in accordance with the enclosed endorsement (*zimn*) to the said Mahinath Thakur, obedient to Islam.

He should perform the said services with diligence and truthfulnss without sparing any efforts (in the performance of these duties). His duties comprised the supervision of financial and administrative affairs collection (of revenue), depositing and withdrawing from the treasury (meaning of some portion is obscure here) of the *Diwan* of the *suba*. He should attend to the administration of the villages, suppression of the rebels and destruction of their strongholds. Apart from collecting his sustenance (remuneration by way of *Nankar-i-Rusum*[25], he should not appropriate any account from the Royal collections. He should keep in view the performance of his duties and submit the installments of government revenue punctually. He should strive for the habitation of *Mahals* and increasing of revenues and perform his due duties in such a way that increase in government revenue and ryots, prosperity may occur gradually and the report of his good service may reach the exalted presence.

He should depute Amins in each *pargana*, get the cultivated and fallow lands measured, contract the ryots individually and extend *Taccavi* to the indigent ones and strive for the increase of cultivation so that in every *Mahal* development and surplus (of revenue) may be brought about. He should correct the *Hast-o Bud* papers, collect the *Kham* (?) revenue in respect of every harvest, bring about increase in revenue and *sayir*, effect economy in expenditure, and deposit the amounts in the treasury. If there are any areas of revenue he should

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25. A kind of rent free grant of land.

> consider them as dues from himself and account for them in the next year. He should collect his *Nankars* and *Dasturs* in accordance with established regulations.
>
> It is ordered that the victorious and illustrious sons and high placed nobles should consider the said Thakur, in heredity to be the *zamindar* of the said *parganas* and (of?) the said *sarkar*.... (1665 AD)".[26]

The endorsement gives the following details of the areas granted. Total 110 *pargana* out of which, in province of Bihar includes *Sarkar* Tirhut including the valley of the mountain (sub-*Himalyan* tract on the North), *zamindari, Milkiat* and settlement of 102 *parganas*, settlement of *Pargana* Dharampur, Sarkar Monghyr 1 *pargana*. In the province of Bengal – 7 *parganas*, of which *Sarkar* Purnia – 5 *Parganas* and *Sarkar* Tajpur – 2 *Parganas*.[27]

A very important document connected with this *farman* is a letter of Aurangzeb, dated Dec. 1666 and addressed to Lashkar Khan, the Governor of Bihar (1664-68). It was written a few months after the issuing of the *farman*, and desired the Governor to honour Mahinath Thakur for his valuable assistance to the *Faujdar* of Darbhanga in the conquest of Morang area. This document is of unique importance for the history of Bihar for it mentions certain contemporary political events in Bihar in the words of the Emperor himself. Its translation is as follow[28]

> "It had come to our Exalted notice from the reports of the *Waqai Nigar* of *Suba* Bihar that the ill-fated *Zamindar* of Morang, in his false pride, had been the creator of disturbances. Accordingly the late Mirza Khan, *Faujdar* of Darbhanga alongwith the men of

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26 . Qeyamuddin Ahmad, op.cit., pp. 96-97.
27 . Ibid.
28 . Ibid.

> Mahinath Thakur (1666-1687) and his brother Nirpat Thakur having displayed, the prowess of their swordsmanship gave a thorough beating to that ill fated one (Raja of Morang). He (*faujdar*) having died a natural death there, his brother Masum Khan was appointed in his place as *Faujdar* of Darbhanga. He was honoured with a *khillat* and a horse with gold trappings. The good services and exertions of the deceased Khan in the capture of the fort and the reduction of the enemy came to our notice. As a matter of fact, this is the result of the (efforts) of Daud Khan of worthy rank for he kept the royal servants contented and devoted to the performance of good deeds ... some words here are illegible. A necklace of pearls, worth Rs. 50,000/- had (accordingly) been granted to the said (Daud) Khan.
>
> Since Mahinath has displayed such valour, I have by an exalted *farman* granted him the *Sadr zamindari* and settlement of Sarkar Tirhut and *zamindari* of Pargana Dharampur, Sarkar Munghyr and conferred upon him a *khilat* and *Mahi Maratib*. The Valiant Khan (Lashkar Khan) too, should bestow some consideration upon him which may honour him in the eyes of his neighbours and send him a letter of approbation assuring him of the permanent enjoyment of the *zamindari* so that other subordinates may be spurred to similar good services (1666)".[29]

These two documents give a good account of the evolution of Darbhanga Raj from the position of petty official of the empire to the likeness of a territorial chiefs. As mentioned above the emperor Akbar granted Gopal Thakur the position of a petty functionary with a cash remuneration. But in due course of time with the favour of successive Mughal rulers specially during Aurangzeb's reign Mahinath Thakur was granted the *sadar zamindari* and a large number of *Parganas* in the *sarkars* of Tirhut, Monghyr, Purnia and Tajpur. He was also favoured with a *khilats* and *Mahi Maratib*. These honours were usually conferred upon

29. Qeyamuddin Ahmad, op.cit., pp, 96-97.

Rajas, chiefs and *Mansabdars* and not on middle ranking functionaries. Besides the grant was very extensive one covering the *zamindari* of over 100 parganas spread over Bihar and Bengal.

These grants alongwith *chaudhari* and *Qanungo* were made hereditary. The acquisition of the status of a Raj also probably led to the inauguration of the practice of succession by the law of Primogeniture. In the beginning it was the will of the dying rulers and it continued till the English became the master of the country. During the later Mughals when the central authority became weak like many other *zamindars* of Bihar, this Raj also came to acquire more and more power. It received the first check when Alivardi became the governor of Bengal (1740-1756). But by then the House had attained such positon that Alivardi himself conferred the title of '*Raja*' on Raghava Singh. The strength and the power of the Raj can be well imagined from the fact that in the time of Raja Narendra Singh, it could defy the authority of government by withholding the payment of the revenue.

In a report to the Patna committee of Revenue, Shitab Rai, the Naib *diwan* of Bihar, admits that since the decline of the empire the feeble government of the Nazims has rendered the *zamindars* independent. But this growing power received another shock when the rule of the British East India Company began over *suba* Bihar. Raja Madhara Singh also resisted it but he had to compromise in the end which surely curtailed much of the powers of this Raj.

Thus it is clear that the Darbhanga Raj is different from the other *zamindari* of *Suba* Bihar. It evolved gradually from Akbar's period to that of Aurangzeb. It started with the appointment of Mahesh Thakur as a petty government official to the elevation of Mahinath Thakur to a chief rank.

Now it seems necessary to give a brief account of the chiefs of Darbhanga to understand their nature of relationship with the Mughal imperial authority.

MAHESH THAKUR

Mahesh Thakur the first chief of Darbhanga Raj was son of one Chan Thakur, a residents of Bhaur village which was an important seat of learning.[30] Mahesh Thakur was the youngest among his brothers.[31] From his early childhood, he was deeply interested in learning specially Sanskrit literature and became a great scholar of Sanskrit of his time. His scholarship made a deep impression on emperor Akbar who rewarded him by appointing him as *Chaudhari* and *Qanungo* of Tirhut. Even after his appointment as *Chaudharai* or *Qanungoi*, Mahesh Thakur continued to devote more time in learning than attending the affairs of the government.[32]

However, Mahesh Thakur carried out his administrative duties efficiently. He suppressed the rebel *zamindars* of the area and recovered the lands which had been occupied by them forcibly. He also settled the disputes with the family of the *Oinwaras*[33] by giving them the *Parganas* of

30. Biharilal Fitrat, *Ain-i-Tirhut* or *Tawarikh-i-Fitrat* (Urdu), Bahar Kashmir Publication, Lucknow, 1883, p. 27.
31. R.N. Chaudhary, *Political History of Khandavala Dynasty in Mithila (1556-1793)*, Delhi, 1987 (ICHR), p. 45.
32. Ibid.
33. *Oinwaras* were the former ruling family of Tirhut.

Bachhaura, Aharaura, Bhala and Khanda and received the agreement letter (*svatvanivrttipatra*) written by them in return. One Adhara Das, a *Kayastha* was his *diwan* and Damodar Jha was appointed to look after the administration of Tirhut.[34] All the petty *zamindars* of surrounding areas acknowledged his authority and paid their taxes to the Mughal rulers through him and Mahesh Thakur paid one lakh rupees annually to the imperial government.[35]

During the closing years of his life, Mahesh Thakur was not happy and retired to Banaras where he breathed his last.[36] We don't know the exact date of his death but it seems that he died sometimes in 1578. He ruled for about a year and a half.[37] The headquarters of Mahesh Thakur was at Bhaura.[38] The jurisdiction of Mahesh Thakur extended from "*Az gang ta Sang wa az kosi ta Ghosi*" i.e. from the Ganga in the south to the mountains in the north (upto Nepal) and from Kosi in the east (in Purnia district) to the whole of Tirhut which was bounded by the Gandak at Hajipur.[39]

Mahesh Thakur devoted much of his time in pursuing literary activities. He wrote a verified history of Akbar's reign entitled *Sarvades Vitrant Samgrah* in Sanskrit. The original copy of this work is preserved in the India Office Library, London.[40] He also wrote *A Loka Pradipa* a

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34 . Bakhshi Mukund Jha, *Mithila Bashami Itihash* (Hindi), pp. 69-70.
35 . Ibid., p. 72.
36 . Jata Shankar Jha, op.cit., p. 26.
37 . B.P. Ambashthaya, op.cit., p. 74.
38 . Parmeshwar Jha, *Mithila Tattwa Vimarsa*, p. 7.
39 . *Purnia Settlement Report*, op.cit.
40 . V.A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mughal*, Oxford, p. 486. The manuscript preserved, appeared to have been written by one Mahesh Thakur about the year 1950. But it seems that the

commentary on Pakshadhara Mishra's *Nyaya loka, Dayasara, Tethitattava Chintamani, Aticharadi nirnaya* and *Darpan*, a commentary on Ganesha Upadhyaya's *Nyaya-Chintamani*. It also seems that Mahesh Thakur had met his great contemporary saint poet, Tulsidas in Banaras.[41]

Gopal Thakur

After the death of Mahesh Thakur, his eldest son, Gopal Thakur succeeded to the *Chaudharai* of Tirhut.[42] Soonafter his succession he faced the problem from the Bharajatiya Rajputs of Bhaura who were very powerful in the region of Tirhut and were creating disturbance in the whole area. But by the strategy of Gopal Thakur and his brother Achyuta Thakur, the rebel were defeated and expelled from there. It is generally believed that Achyuta Thakur mobilized all his forces and played an important role in their defeat and expulsion.[43]

Sometimes in the reign of Akbar, Gopal Thakur was summoned to Delhi to explain the circumstances due to which he was not able to pay his dues and the arrears have accumulated. Gopal Thakur sent his son Hemangad Thakur to represent his case. On being questioned Hemangad informed the imperial authorities that owing to the disturbances created by Bharajatiya Rajputs he had not been able to collect revenue in full in time and requested that he may be given some more time to make the payment of arrears. But he failed to impress the authorities and was imprisoned. In

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manuscript is only a copy of the original written during the life time of Akbar. Now a photocopy of manuscript is preserved in the Raj Library, Darbhanga.

41. R.N. Chaudhari, op,.cit., p. 45.

42. Ibid., p. 45.

43. Jata Shankar Jha, op.cit., p. 26.

prison he began to work upon some astronomical problems. In the absence of writing material, he made the calculation on the ground. The prison authorities considering these acts as a form of mental disease and reported the matter to the emperor. Hemangad Thakur was brought before the emperor and when he was asked about his writing on the ground, he told the emperor that he had worked out the schedule of the eclipses for one thousand years to come.[44] He also informed the emperor of the timing of the next eclipse. The emperor was greatly impressed with his work and immediately ordered him to be released from prison. The arrears of the revenue were also waved.[45] This event had great effect on the life of the Hemangad Thakur. After returning to Tirhut he stopped to cooperate with his father, Gopal Thakur and devoted rest of his life to learning. An important event of Gopal Thakur's time was the land survey and settlement of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by Raja Todar Mal.[46] The survey of Tirhut region was also made and its revenue demand was fixed Rs. 11,63,000 annually, which Gopal Thakur agreed to pay.

The region of Tirhut at that time was the centre of all sorts of rebels and Mughal authority was not firmly established there. It also seems that in view of the disturbed condition, the local authorities refused to acknowledge the power and the position of *khandavalas*.[47] He was not only able to overcome all the difficulties in the Tirhut region but also played very important role in establishing peace and order in North Bihar. Gopal

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44. The name of the work is *Rahu Prag Panji* which informs us about the account of Khandavala family.
45. Jata shankar Jha, op.cit., p. 26.
46. Blockmann, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 352.
47. The family or dynasty of Mahesh Thakur (Darbhanga Raj).

Thakur gave full cooperation to Khan-i-Jahan under whom the Bihar forces were reorganized to fight against the turbulent forces in Bihar.[48] In recognition of his services to the Mughal army for bringing about stability, peace and order in Bihar, emperor Akbar assigned him the region of Tirhut with certain specification of his rights and duties. A *farman* to this effect was issued, which we have already discussed above.

But it seems that the local authorities did not acknowledge the official position of Gopal Thakur, therefore the emperor issued another *farman* clearly specifying that "they should not consider anyone as sharing these powers with him".[49]

The exact territorial jurisdiction of Gopal Thakur is not very clear from the present information but his headquarters was at Darbhanga. After sometimes we find that the differences arose among family members of Gopal Thakur; specially after the death of Achyuta Thakur.[50] It also seems that Gopal Thakur retired to Banaras toward the closing years of his life, and died around 1580.[51] Gopal Thakur was succeeded by his younger brother Parmanand Thakur. He is also mentioned as Rajarishi Parmanand.[52] He had no interest in worldly affairs and therefore after his death as he had no son, the office of the *Chaudhari* and *Qanungo* passed into the hands of Subhankar Thakur, the fifth and the last son of Mahesh Thakur.[53]

48 . *Akbaranama*, Vol. III, p. 180.
49 . See for details in the above mentioned *farman*.
50 . R.N. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 49.
51 . B.P. Ambashthaya, op.cit., p. 233.
52 . Bakshi Mukund Jha, op.cit., p. 100.
53 . Jata Shankar Jha, op.cit., p. 27.

SUBHANKAR THAKUR

Subhankar Thakur spent his early life at Banaras where he got the *shastric* knowledge. He soon became a scholar of repute by his hard work. He wrote two books namely *Tithinirnaya* and *Shrihastamuktaral.* He returned from Banaras on an invitation from Hemangad Thakur (son of Gopal Thakur). Hemangad Thakur offered him the office of *Chaudharai* and *Qanungo* to him but some family members refused to accept his candidature because his maternal-grandfather belonged to a low family. He also faced the problem of getting married in a good family. He however was able to overcome all these problems. He shifted his headquarters from Bhaura to Bhawarah near Madhubani which in the past was the stronghold of the Bharjatiya Rajputs.[54] He established cordial relations with the *faujdar* of Darbhanga, who allowed him to build a town to the west of river Bagmati, in a village, which later came to be known as Subhankar (near Darbhanga).[55] He dug a big tank known as '*Subhankari*' in the village of Ujan.[56] After ruling for 23 years he died in 1617. He had four sons namely Pursottam Thakur, Narayan Thakur, Sundar Thakur and Raghuram Thakur.[57] Being the eldest, Pursottam Thakur became the *Chaudhari* and functioned in that position from 1617 to 1633. During his time, an attempt was made by Raghudeva Mishra, a maternal grandson of Achyuta Thakur, for a share in the estate. He made a representation in this regard to Emperor Shah Jahan. Achyuta Thakur had died without a male issue,

54. R.N. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 49.
55. Ibid.
56. Bakhshi Mukund Jha, op.cit., p. 113. Also see Jata Shankar Jha, op.cit., p. 25.
57. B.P. Ambashthaya, op.cit., p. 233.

Raghudeva the son of his only daughter Kumudni, claimed a share in the joint family property of his maternal grandfather, Mahesh Thakur but he failed to secure a share.[58]

Purshottam Thakur had built his palace in village Chatriya which was named after him and is still known as Purushottampur.[59] It is believed that Pursottam Thakur was invited to Kalaghat (Darbhanga) by the *Faujdar* of Darbhanga and treacherously murdered in 1633 and his wife went to Delhi to represent her case to the emperor, Shah Jahan and succeeded in getting the *faujdar* executed. Thereafter she performed the rites of *sati* on the bank of the river Jamuna at *Nigambodh Ghat.*[60]

Narayan Thakur and Sundar Thakur

Pursottam Thakur was succeeded by his step-brother Narayan Thakur and a *parwana* to this effect was issued in 1634.[61]

The *parwana* of 1634 also made him responsible to look after the affairs of *pargana* Bharawara.[62]

It is clear from the *Mahzarnama*[63] of Sundar Thakur discussed above that he (Sundar Thakur) and Narayan Thakur purchased the shares of their step brothers, out of the amount received as a remuneration of the *Chaudhari* and *Qanungoi.* It seems that the elder brother was only a nominal occupant and the younger brother actually managed the affairs of

58 . Jata Shankar Jha, op.cit., pp. 28-29.
59 . Bakhshi Mukund Jha, *History of Mithila*, pp. 113-115.
60 . Ibid., p. 134.
61 . S.N. Singh expresses his doubts if Narayan Thakur ever assumed the office of Chaudhari (*History of Tirhut*, Calcutta, 1922, p. 317).
62 . Ibid.
63 . The *Mahzarnama* is already mentioned above.

Chaudhari. It also appears from the *Mahzarnama* that Sundar Thakur took a lot of interest in the affairs of *Chaudhari.*[64]

During the time of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, Mithila formed a part of the administration of the *Suba* of Bihar.[65] The pattern of administration established by Akbar continued during Jahangir's reign without any change. The administration of the *suba* was managed by a *subedars* through *faujdars* who were deputed to administer *sarkars.* Prince Pervez was appointed as the governor of Bihar in 1621, who after his own name, founded a village called Parwezabad near Darbhanga, now known as Pahleza. In 1624, because of the rebellious activities of Prince Khurram, Bihar including the region of Tirhut, was disturbed for sometime. However, the *Khandavalas* remained peaceful and continued their service of *Chaudhari* and *Qanungo* during the time of Jahangir. Besides, during the time of Jahangir, Darbhanga and Hajipur were assigned to Abdullah Khan in *jagir.*

During the reign of Shahjahan, Mithila came into prominence. Some of the important nobles like Mirza Abdul Rasul Khan, founder of Mohalla Rasulpur at Darbhanga, Nawab Sajawar Khan, Mirza Abdul Mali or Mirza Khan were the *faujdars* of Darbhanga. It is said that during the time of Sundar Thakur who succeeded Narayan Thakur, Mithila was re-surveyed and a fresh rate of revenue was prepared.[66]

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64 . The *Mahzarnama* states that Gunakar Thakur the son of Purshottam Thakur and Hariram Thakur son of Raghuram Thakur, have sold their shares in the names of Narayan Thakur and myself ... we two also continue to possess our own share in it".

65 . Elliot & Dowson, op.cit., pp. 137-38.

66 . Parameshwar Jha, op.cit., pp. 29-30, R.N. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 53.

Sundar Thakur built a palace for himself to the north of Darbhanga, which came to be known as Sundarpur. He is also known for his liberal mindedness. He built a tank in the village of Adalpura Bhalpatti in Raghavapur *Pargana* known as *Sundar Sagar*.[67]

Although we did not find the exact period during which Sundar Thakur held the office of *Chaudhari* and *Qanungo* but going through the *farman* of Aurangzeb (1665) and a letter dated 1666 written by him to Laskar Khan the governor of Bihar, it appears that Sundar Thakur held the office uptil 1660. Both the documents refers about the assistance rendered by Mahinath Thakur to the imperial forces in the conquests of Palamau and Morang. As we know that Palamau was conquered in 1661[68], therefore it seems that Sundar Thakur's period of *Chaudhari* was not beyond 1660. In one of the *farman* which is dated 1657, the right of *nankar* of village Malangia in the same *Parganas* was granted to Sundar Thakur.[69]

According to the *Mahzarnama* of Sundar Thakur (1652), it appears that even the share of Gopal Thakur had been purchased from the legal heirs. The statement in *Mahzarnama* closes with the account as to how the tow-third shares (of Gopal Thakur and Parmanand Thakur) came into his hands.[70] He was the first chief of the Darbhanga Raj who by purchase and also by conquest as mentioned above brought the entire resources of the family into one hand which not only strengthened his

67. R.N. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 53.
68. See in detail in the chapter on the Palamau chieftaincy.
69. R.N. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 54.
70. *Mahzarnama of Sundar Thakur.*

position but also paved the way for the establishment of a full fledged *zamindari* in the time of his son and successor, Mahinath Thakur.

MAHINATH THAKUR

Mahinath Thakur, the eldest son of Sundar Thakur succeeded to the office of *Chaudhari* of Tirhut during the reign of Aurangzeb. During the same period, Mahinath Thakur attained all the dignity of a big *zamindar* as he revived excessive royal favours.

The most serious problem faced by Mahinath Thakur was the hostile attitude of Raja Gaj Simha of Simraon[71], who had obtained the title of *Raja* from Shahjahan. Raja Gaj Simha had built a strong fortress in Simraon or Sugaon and showed hostile attitude towards Mahinath Thakur. Mahinath Thakur attacked him and a battle ensued in which Raja Gaj Simha was defeated.[72] However he escaped from the fort and send *zamindar* of Sheohar as his emissionary for a negotiated settlement. He offered to secede the *Pargana* of 'Babara' in Champaran in exchange for the fortress of Simraon. Mahinath Thakur agreed to this proposal and the deal was finally accepted.[73]

During the reign of Aurangzeb, Mirza Khan, Fidai Khan and Shaikh Mohammad Jiwan were the *faujdars* of Darbhanga. The chief of Palamau and the *zamindars* of Morang (the Tarai area now under Nepal) continued to harass officials and disregarded the imperial authority. The

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71. According to Parmeshwar Jha, Raja Gaj Simha was the son of Ugrasen Singh, the founder of the Bettiah Raj (Also see in detail on Bettiah Raj chapter).
72. S.N. Singh, *History of Tirhut*, p. 217. also Bakhshi Mukund Jha, op.cit., p. 156.
73. Bakhshi Mukund Jha, op.cit., pp. 156-57.

emperor took the matter seriously and ordered the *faujdar* of Darbhanga and the *Chaudhari* of the Khandavalas dynasty of Tirhut to take action against recalcitrant elements.

An army under the command of Mirza Khan alongwith Mahinath Thakur invaded Palamau and defeated the chief and captured the fort of Palamau.[74]

Similarly to punish the *zamindar* of Morang (Tarai district west of Cooch Bihar) a combined army of Mirza Khan *faujdar* of Darbhanga and Ali Vardi Khan of Gorakhpur, alognwith the contingent of Mahinath Thakur under the command of his brother Narapati Thakur, launched an attack on the strong hold of Morang and in a pitched battle defeated them (1644). Mirza Khan however died in the course of the battle[75] It appears that Mahinath Thakur had deputed his younger brother Narapati Thakur to help the Mughal forces in suppressing the Morang chief.[76] The emperor was much pleased with the services rendered by Mahinath in this campaign and honoured him with many favour and rewards. A *farman* was issued to him. This *farman* as well as the letter of Emperor Aurangzeb to Laskar Khan, the governor of Bihar (which we have discussed above), gives an idea of the services rendered by Mahinath Thakur, in those campaigns. In reward, Mahinath Thakur got Tirhut *Sarkar* including the valley of the mountain (sub-Himalayan tract on the north). He was given 110 parganas from Bengal and Bihar. Besides, he was also honoured with the grant of a *khillats* and *Mahi Maratib*.

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74 . The Subjugation of Palamu has been mentioned in the chapter of Chero Chieftancy in details.

75 . R.N. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 56.

76 . R.K. Chaudhary, *History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut*, pp. 164-168.

Mahinath Thakur was a great patron of Maithili literature. It was under his patronage that Lochan Kavi wrote the book *Raja Tarangini*[77] which describes the literary and social conditions of the time. He also wrote *Naisadha Karya*, which is available in the *Raj* Library, Darbhanga.

As Mahinath Thakur had no male heir, therefore, he adopted his younger brother Narapati as his son and successor. He prepared a will in which Narpati Singh was declared as his successor. The English translation of his will run as follows[78]:

> "To Babu Shri Narpati Singh, the abode of all good (may you live long) may prosperity attend you blessings. I, Shriman Mahinath Singh Thakur commandeth on account of ill health, I do not find my strength in me and so I intend to go to and remain at Banaras. I have therefore, given to you the Raj of Tirhut the *pargana* of Dharampur and all the moveable and immoveable properties with the *Malikana Dasturi* which you shall enjoy, I have made you my successor".[79]

Narapati Thakur

On the basis of the will of Mahinath Thakur after his death, Narapati Thakur succeeded to the *Gaddi* of Darbhanga Raj in 1690.[80] He was a brave man and showed his valour on many occasions. He led his brother's army in support of the imperial army in the campaign of Palamau and Morang soon after taking over the reign of Darbhanga Raj.

Narapati Thakur was faced with the hostile activities of the Raja of Makwanpur, a petty chieftain in the Nepal Tarai. The chief of Makwanpur

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77 . R.N. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 60.

78 . It is available in Darbhanga Raj, *Mahafizkhana*.

79 . Jata Shankar Jha, op.cit., pp. 33-34, it is also available in Darbhanga Raj *Mahafizkhana*.

80 . R.N. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 61.

had annexed Tantar, Janakpur and 23 other *Mahals* of Mithila during the period of the decline of *Oinwara* dynasty. The *zamindars* of Tirhut continued to make efforts to bring back the lost territories under their control and ultimately succeeded in forcing the chief of Makwanpur to accept their subordination as well as an assurance to pay annual tribute. But in 1675 they again declared their independence and stopped paying tribute or *Nazrana* to the Khandavala family.[81]

After informing about these developments to the *subedar* of Bihar, Narapati Thakur, alongwith other *zamindars* of the area on the pretence of hunting, attacked the Raja of Makwanpur and took him prisoner. He was brought to Darbhanga and presented before the *faujdar*. The Raja was released and his *zamindari* was given back to him after he accepted Islam and agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 1200 (in kind in the form of elephants) to Narapati Thakur.[82]

Narapati had his residence in village Rahika of the Madhubani sub-division. His wife, Urvasi Thakurani had built *Urvasesvara Mahadeva* temple in that village which was known as *Urvasinatha*. The inscription on the temple of Jaladhari confirms it. Narapati Thakur got imperial help to equip his fort in Bhaura with arms and ammunitions.[83] It appears that during the reign of Aurangzeb Fidai Khan, the governor of Bihar granted him two important market towns, of *Ramchowk Bazar* and *Bara Bazar* of Darbhanga.[84]

81 . R.N. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 61.
82 . Bakhshi Mukund Jha, op.cit., p. 158.
83 . Ibid., pp. 157-58.
84 . R.N. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 62.

Like Mahinath Thakur, Narapati Thakur was also a great poet and lover of Maithili literature. He also patronized Lochan Kavi and others. When he became too old and his health began to fail he decided to retire to Banaras, like his predecessors after making over the *zamindari* to his eldest son, Raghava Singh, by executing a will, in his favour. The will runs as follows (1699-1701) :

> "I have now become old and constantly getting illness more and more so I am going to remain in the holy place (Banaras). I have given you the Raj of Tirhut, the *pargana* of Dharampur and all the moveable and immoveable properties with the *Malikana Dasturi*. You shall enjoy them and I have given to Babu Shri Sheonandan Singh Babu Shri Raghonandan Singh and Babu Shri Thakur singh all your brothers, certain pieces of lands for their maintenance in respect of which documents with details have been executed, you shall maintain them intact".

Raja Raghava Singh

Narapati Thakur died in 1701 after a reign of 11 years.[85] He was succeeded by his eldest son, Raja Raghava Singh to the throne in 1701. He established friendly relations with the governor of Bihar and managed his *zamindari* efficiently during the remaining period of Aurangzeb reign. . In 1720 Alivardi Khan conferred upon him the title of *Raja*. He had acquired the Patta *Mukarari* of *Sarkar* Tirhut at an annual *Jama* of one lakh of rupees.

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85 . R.N. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 62.

Chapter - VIII

BETIA RAJ

Betia Raj, another important chieftaincy of North Bihar, comprised of the *Mahals* of Samru, Mehsi and Majhora in *Sarkar* Champaran.[1] Abul Fazl had mentioned Udai Karan as the *zamindar* of Champaran[2], but had not described the exact location and extent of the Betia chieftaincy. Since there is no reference of any other chief in Champaran in the time of Akbar, we may assume that Udai Karan was then leading chief of Champaran holding the bulk of the area known by this name.

The term Champaran was applied to a wide tract of land covered with Champa trees. Abul Fazl informs us that "in the *sarkar* of Champaran, the seed of the Vetch Mash (Phaseolus radiatus) is cast on unploughed soil where it grow without labour or tilling. Long pepper grows wild in its forest".[3]

However District Gazetteers of Champaran, records Betia Raj as a prominent chieftaincy which covered a vast areas, during 18th century. The chieftaincy comprised the parts of Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Patna and Saran districts in Bihar and Allahabad, Basti, Banaras, Faizabad, Gorakhpur and Mirzapur districts of modern Uttar Pradesh. It was spread over an area of 14,43073 acres (1824 square miles).[4]

The Betia chiefs were Brahmins who traced their origin from Oinwara dynasty (1353-1527) which had also established Simraon Raj in

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1. *Ain-i-Akbari* II, p. 69.
2. *Akbarnama* III, p. 136-37.
3. *Ain-i-Akbari* II, p. 67.
4. O'Malley, *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers, Champaran*, 1907, p. 135.

Mithila.[5] The Oinwara dynasty was established during the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq[6] (1325) and it continued till 1527, when Nusrat Shah the ruler of Bengal attacked Mithila and killed Kansanarayana, the last Oinwara chief. Thereafter chaos and confusion prevailed in the Mithila region and Oinwara dynasty declined.

It is said that a major portion of the northern Bihar including Champaran and Tirhut originally formed a part of the Mithila Kingdom. But with the downfall of the Oinwara dynasty in the early 16th century, the whole area was parcelled out among a number of petty chiefs.[7] Betia Raj seems to be one of them and Gangeswar Dev was the founder of this chieftaincy. The other chiefs of the Betia Raj were Makeswar Dev, Raja Dev, Dhanoraj, Udaikaran Raj, Jadhu Raj,Ugrasen Singh and Raja Gaj Singh etc.[8] but we fail to get detail account about any of these chiefs in contemporary or even letter historical works. However, on the basis of few references in Mughal chronicles as well as some family records, we have attempted to reconstruct the history of Betia chieftaincy.

Babur in his memoirs had mentioned Champaran as an independent estate and had also given revenue estimate of Champaran as 1,90,88060 tankas[9] But he had made no reference about the rulers of Champaran.

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5. Ram Prakash Sharma, *Mithila Ka Itihas* (Hindi, Darbhanga), pp. 303-04. Ram Prakash tried to prove the fact that the Betia chieftaincy had connection to the Oinwara dynasty. He finds some similarities between both the families. Both the families belonged to Kashyap Gotra and were residents of Naimisaraya. They had similar titles of '*Dev*' and later on '*Sinh*'. There were similarities in the name of their capitals. The capital of the Oinwara dynasty was at Sugona near Madhubani in Darbhanga while Sugaon near Betia in Champaran was the capital of Betia Raj.
6. R.K. Chaudhary, *History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut (1206-1765)*, Varanasi, 1970, pp. 26-27.
7. Upender Thakur, *History of Mithila* (Darbhanga, 1956), pp. 340-42.
8. Ram Prakash Sharma, op.cit.
9. *Tuzuk-i-Baburi*, p. 293.

During Humayun reign also Betia *zamindars* have no contact with the Mughal court. The first reference of a Betia *zamindar* occurs during Mughal campaign against Afghans of Bihar. Abul FAzl writes that Udai Karan offered his submission and joined Muzaffar Khan Turbati to recapture Hajipur[10] which had been occupied by a band of Afghans led by Taj Khan Panwar, Sulaiman Panwar, Fath Khan Musavai, Shahbaz Khan '*Arbi*' and Than Rai. These Afghan have also killed about 100 troopers including Muhammad Shaukati who was holding Hajipur on behalf of Muzaffar Khan Turbati the Governor of the *Suba*. Udai Karan helped imperial army to cross swollen river Gandak under the cover of darkness at some distance to the north of Hajipur. The enemy was taken by surprise and suffered humiliating defeat at the hands of imperial army. The fort of Hajipur was captured.[11]

In 1576-77 Raja Udai Karan once again helped Muzaffar Khan Turbati in his campaign against the Afghan chiefs of Chotanagpur region.[12] After reaching Chotanagpur, he came to know that the Afghan have assembled at Basai which was about 45 miles south-east of Ranchi. With the help of Raja Udai Karan who knew the topography of the areas, Muzaffar Khan was able to reach Basai and in a surprise attack defeated a band of 4000 Afghans. The Afghans fled into the nearby forests. Udai Karan once again helped the Mughal army to trace the enemy in the forest and in a pitched battle completely defeated them. The Mughal armies also succeeded in capturing Afghan chiefs Yusuf Mati, Adam and Chuna, and also took possession of their strongholds.

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10. *Akbarnama* III, pp. 136-37.
11. Ibid.
12. S.H. Askari, "The Suba of Bihar under Akbar" *B.P.P.* XLV, p. 7, (no. 128-1945),Also "Dutch Chronicle of Mughal India" in *JBRS*, XXVIII (1942-XXXII), pp. 197-206.

Thereafter during the reign of Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, we hardly get any reference of Betia chief in contemporary account. However, Hunter on the basis of some local records writes that during the reign of Shah Jahan, Raja Jay Singh the son of Raja Ugrasen Singh was granted the title of '*Raja*' by the emperor Shah Jahan.[13] But more details about this event (the activities of the Raja) have not been provided by him.

During the reign of Aurangzeb, we do not find any reference of Betia chieftaincy. However from the later references it appears that the chieftaincy continued to exist throughout the Mughal empire and it became one of the important chieftaincies during the first half of the 18th century of Bihar. In 1694 after the death of Raja Jay Singh, the *zamindari* was divided among his three sons Dalip Singh, Onithi Singh and Shatrajit Singh. Dalip Singh got the Betia Raj, Onithi Singh was given Sheohar while Shatrajit Singh founded the Madhuban family in *Pargana* Mehsi.[14] Dalip Singh ruled till 1715 and was succeeded by his son Raja Dhrup Singh who ruled till 1763.

We also got reference of Betia Raj's conflict with its neighbouring chieftaincy of Darbhanga. As mentioned in the chapter on Darbhanga chieftaincy, Mahesh Thakur laid claim over some areas of Mithila, which was under the control of the Betia chieftaincy. This was strongly resented by the Betia chiefs and consequently several skirmishes took place between their armed retainers. However Mahesh Thakur tried to settle the dispute with Raja Udai Karan, the chief of Betia Raj by giving up his claim over some of those

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13 . W.W. Hunter, *The Statistical Account of Bengal, Tirhut and Champaran*, Vol. XIII, p. 252.
14 . Ibid.

regions.[15] But the relations between the two states were again strained during the beginning of Aurangazeb's reign when Raja Jay Singh built a strong fort at Betia. Raja Mahinath Thakur of Darbhanga considered the action of Gaj Singh as an hostile act and launched a powerful attack on Betia fort. Gaj Singh was completely defeated and the fort was captured by Mahinath Thakur.[16] Raja Gaj Singh now opened negotiations with Mahinath Thakur through Babu of Sheohar for a settlement. He offered to withdraw his forces from the *Parganas* of Babra in Champaran provided the fort of Sugaon was returned to him. Mahinath Thakur agreed to his request and the deal was finally settled[17] and the friendly relation between the two states was restored. After sometimes Mahinath Thakur presented Babra *Pargana* to the daughter of Raja Bhupa Singh[18] at the time of her marriage with the Babu of Sheohar. The grant of the *Pargana* of Babra once again became a cause of conflict between the chieftaincies of Betia and Darbhanga Raj. Dhrup Singh, the grandson of Raja Gaj Singh soon after becoming the ruler of Betia forcefully took over the Babra *Pargana* from the Babu of Sheohar. Raja Raghav Singh, the chieftain of Darbhanga immediately dispatched a strong contingent of his retainers under Sardar Khan who defeated Dhrup Singh and compelled him to return the *Pargana* to the Babu of Sheohar.[19] The disputes between the two neighbouring chieftains continued even after the death of Aurangzeb and helped Ali vardi Khan to suppress the rebellions of *zamindars* of North Bihar

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15 . See Chapter on Darbhanga Raj.
16 . S.N. Singh, *History of Tirhut*, p. 217, fn. 4.
17 . Bakshi Mukund Jha, *Mithila Bhashamaya Itihasa*, pp. 156-57.
18 . A petty *zamindar* who was a friend of Raja Mahinath Thakur of Darbhanga.
19 . Mukund Jha, op.cit., p. 178.

and restoring peace in the area.[20] When Alivardi Khan was knocking at the door of Betia, there was quarrel between Raja Dhrup Singh of Betia and Raja Raghav Singh of Darbhanga. Therefore, Alivardi easily defeat Dhrup Singh and captured Betia.[21]

Thus it appears that the relation between the two states did not remain cordial for a long time. The hostilities between them resulted in frequent skirmishes, and loss of life and property on both the sides. However, by the end of 18th century, Anand Kishore of Betia and Raja Chatra Singh of Darbhanga sorted out their differences completely and established a friendly relationship between themselves.

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20 . Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riyaz-us-Salatin* tr. Abdus Salam, p. 296.

21 . Mukund Jha Bakshi, op.cit., pp. 204-08.

Chapter – IX

HATHWA RAJ

Kalyanpur chieftaincy more popularly known as the Hathwa Raj was one of the important chieftaincy of North Bihar during the Mughal period. The capital city of Kalyanpur presently a village is situated 2½ miles west of Mirganj and 12 miles North of Siwan, in Saran district of North Bihar.[1]

The chieftaincy comprised of Sipah and Huespur, the two *Mahals* of *Sarkar* Saran.[2] The chiefs of Kalyanpur were also known as Raja of Huespur because the headquarters of this chieftaincy was shifted to Huespur in the first half of 17^{th} century. According to Saran District Gazetteers, the Hathwa Raj also comprised some parts of Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Shahabad, Patna in Bihar and Darjeeling the district of Bengal and Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh.[3] The Raj was spread over an area of 561 square miles.[4] The rulers of Hathwa Raj were regarded as one of the oldest aristocratic families in Bihar.[5]

During the ancient period, this region known as Kosala, and was inhabited by the *cheros*, an aboriginal race.[6] Later on the *cheros* were expelled by the Kshatriyas (Rajput) who in turn were supplanted by Bhumihar Brahman and their leader Raja Birsen in due course of time laid the foundation of Hathwa Raj.[7] However we do not find the exact date of

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1. O'Malley, *District Gazetteers Saran*, Vol. 12, p. 153.
2. *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 69.
3. *District Gazetteers Saran*, op.cit., pp. 153-54.
4. Ibid., p. 144.
5. Ibid.
6. G.N. Dutt, "History of Hathwa Raj, 1904", *JASB*, Vol. 73, p. 179.
7. Ibid.

establishment of Hathwa Raj but it appears that the chieftaincy was established during the early Medieval period.

It is generally believed that the ruling family of Hathwa Raj was related to the Majhauli Raj of Gorakhpur.[8] However due to paucity of source material it had not been possible to reconstruct a proper history of Hathwa Raj in our period. It is alleged that the *farmans, nishans, sanads, parwanas* etc. were all destroyed when these documents were taken away by Raja Fateh Sahi, the chief of Hathwa Raj when he rebelled against the British East India company in 1767.[9]

We find the reference of Raja Jay Mal of Hathwa during 1539 when Humayun after his defeat in the battle of Chausa, came to Bihia near the chieftaincy of Kalyanpur (Hathwa Raj). Raja Jay Mal helped Humayun by providing food and fodder for his troops. After sometimes when Sher Khan fully established his rule in North India, he took stern action against Raja Jay Mal. The Raja fled to the forests of Gorakhpur and remained there as a rebel for a long time. However when Humayun re-established the Mughal empire in India, he gave four *parganas* to Raja Jubraj Sahi, the grandson of Jay Mal.[10]

Thereafter we get references of conflict between Jubraj Sahi and Kabul Mohammad of Barharia, an Afghan chief who was one of the

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8. Anand A. Yang, *The Limited Raj, Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District 1793-1920*, OUP 1989, pp. 58-59, Majhauli tradition associates Mayyur with three wives and a Kurmi Concubine. From each he had sons who established their chieftaincy from their inheritances. The first marriage to a Brahmin initiated the line of Misra Brahmin from his second wife, a Surajbhans Rajput came the founder of the Majhauli Raj and the son of his Bhumihar Brahmin wife received the portion of his estate that later constituted the Hathwa and Tamkuhi chieftaincy. His Kurmi concubine produced an heir who established the Kokradih estates (*The Limited Raj*, op.cit., p. 59).
9. G.N. Dutt, op.cit., p. 179.
10. Shaad Azimabadi, *Tarikh-i-Suba Bihar*, vol. I, pp. 121-22.

supporters of Daud Khan (an Afghan rebel). In one of the battles, Jubraj Sahi killed Kabul Mohammad and destroyed his fort and captured *Pargana* Sipah.[11] In appreciation of the service rendered by him Akbar conferred the *parganas* assigned to him by Humayun. But thereafter we have no information about Jubraj in the contemporary and even later account.

The next reference of the Hathwa Raj and its chief Kalyan Mal occurs in our sources during the revolt of 1580-83 in the eastern provinces, Abul Fazl writes that Masum Khan Farankhudi and Afghan noble who held the charge of Ghazipur, rebelled in 1580. Shahbaz Khan immediately marched against him and in a sharp engagement he was defeated. But he escaped from the battle field and fled to Bahraich and from there proceeded towards Kalyanpur and appealed the Raja to give him shelter. The Raja, though until then had not accepted the suzerainty of the Mughal, refused to give him any sort of help. Therefore Masum Khan Farankhudi went back to Ghazipur and with the help of certain Mughal nobles such as Saham Khan Jalair of Narhan in Saran and Pahar Khan submitted before Mirza Aziz Koka, the governor of Bihar. He was forgiven and granted Mehsi in Champaran in *Jagir*.[12]

We find another reference of Raja Kalyan Mal when Noor Mohammad the son of Tar Khan Diwana and Khawaja Abdul Ghafoor rebelled against the imperial authorities during 1582-83. They tried to plunder the *caravan* of salt merchants, who were passing through Saran district. The merchant put up a strong fight by making a breast works of their bags. At the

11. O'Malley, *District Gazetteers Saran*, vol. 12, p. 21.
12. Ibid.

same time the rebels also came to know about the approach of Khan-i-Azam, who was marching from Jaunpur. Therefore, they retreated and took refuge at a place near Tirhut. When Khan-i-Azam arrived there with his contingents, he found the rebels at the other side of the Ganga. He began to construct a bridge across the Ganga. As the bridge was near completion the rebels lost the courage and fled. They went to Kalyanpur to take shelter but Raja Kalyan Mal refused to help them.[13] Hotly chased by the Mughal army Abdul Ghafoor along with his men marched towards Bhati the principality of Isa Khan in Bengal, but on the way were caught and slaughtered by the Khasi Gossiyah tribes in Santhal *Parganas*. Noor Mohammad who was marching to Gaya was arrested near Champaran and was executed by the followers of Khan-i-Azam.[14]

Although as referred above Raja Kalyan Mal had helped Mughal army against the rebels on two occasions, but surprisingly neither the Mughal commander recommended him for a reward nor he himself came out to offer his submission. However in the local soruces it has been mentioned that the Emperor was greatly pleased with Kalyan Mal and as a mark of favour he gave the title of 'Raja'.[15]

After this for the entire period of Jahangir's reign we do not get any information about Hathwa chief in any of the contemporary Persian account. However according to local sources Raja Khem Karan is said to have established very cordial relations with Emperor Jahangir and also helped the

13 . *Akbarnama* III, pp. 396-97.
14 . Ibid.
15 . *District Gazetteer Saran* (Patna, 1930), p. 144.

imperial government to consolidate its rule in Bihar. The Emperor in appreciation of his services favoured him the titles of *Raja Bahadur* and *Sahi.*[16]

Therefore, we get reference of Raja Kalyanpur in the account of Peter Mundy in the year 1632-33. He writes that the Raja of Kalyanpur was well received at Patna and was granted a robe of Honour but soonafter he was thrown into prison and his properties were plundered. His wife and his supporters rebelled against the Mughals and created chaos and confusion for Baba Beg, an imperial revenue officer. Khawaja Anwar was dispatched to help Baba Beg.[17] But he fail to provide other details of this event.

Besides these brief references, we have no other information about the Kalyanpur chieftaincy during the reign of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

The Other Chieftaincies

In the earlier chapter we have discussed in detail the account of major chieftaincies of Bihar *suba*. In the course of our study we have come across references of several other chieftaincies such as Panchet, Seor, Garhi, Ratanpur, Ramnagar, Bhagwanpur, Chai etc. during the Mughal period.

But the information available about the areas held by the chiefs and the details about the families of these chiefs are very little and it becomes extremely difficult for us to form any opinion about the nature of these chieftaincy. However on the basis of the information available to us we are giving below an account of some of these chieftaincies.

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16 . G.N. Dutt, op.cit., p. 182.
17 . Ibid.

Panchet chieftaincy is not mentioned during the reign of Akbar, but it is recorded in *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi* as an important chieftaincy which lay close to the territory of Shams Khan, the *zamindar* of Birbhum in the time of Jahangir.[18] We do not find a clear geographical description of Panchet chieftaincy in the contemporary or near contemporary Mughal chronicles. But it appears that the chieftaincy was in the *suba* of Bihar adjacent to the *suba* of Bengal.[19] Blochmann places Panchet Chieftaincy outside the western frontier of the Akbari *Suba* of Bengal.[20] Ahsan Raza Khan put the Panchet chieftaincy near south of Garhi, which is mentioned in the *Ain* as the boundary of the *subas* of Bihar and Bengal and the two *subas* did not have the common boundary. The intervening territory seems to have comprised of a number of chieftaincies and Panchet was one of them.[21]

Therefore it seems that the Panchet chieftaincy was situated in a secluded area and it could not be subdued during the time of Akbar. During the period of Jahangir, Qasim Khan, the governor of Bengal, sent an expedition under the command of Shaikh Kamal against Bir Hamir, the *zamindar* of Panchet, and Shams Khan, the *zamindar* of Birbhum. It appears that Bir Hamir submitted to the Mughals without creating any disturbance against them.[22] He also agreed to help Shaikh Kamal against Shams Khan, the *zamindar* of Birbhum. Shams Khan resisted the Mughal forces for sometimes

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18. Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi,* tr. M.I. Bohra (Guwahati, 1936), vol. I, p. 18.
19. Ahmad Raza Khan, *Suba of Bihar under the Mughals 1582-1707* (unpublished thesis) Aligarh 1985, pp. 179-81.
20. H. Blochmann, *Contribution to the Geography and History of Bengal* (Calcutta 1968), p. 15.
21. Ahsan Raza Khan, *Chieftains in the Mughal Empire during the reign of Akbar* (1977, Shimla), p. 173.
22. *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, op.cit., p. 19.

but at last he was defeated and submitted to the Mughals. He sincerely apologized for his misconduct and was forgiven.[23]

We get reference of Raja Bir Narain, another chief of Panchet who was given a *mansab* of 700 *zat* and 300 *sawar* during the reign of Shah Jahan.[24] Blochmann informs us that the chief of Panchet paid a fixed *Peshkash* to the Mughals[25] but the details of the *Peshkash* are not available. Bir Narain died in 1632.[26] Thereafter we get no other reference of Panchet chieftaincy in our period.

Seor, another chieftaincy lay in the middle of *sarkar* Bihar. In *Ain-i-Akbari*, Seor is mentioned as a *Mahal* of *Sarkar* Bihar, having a strong fort on a high hill.[27]

Abul Fazl in *Akbarnama* writes that in 1577-78 the chieftain of Seor submitted without offering any resistance before Muzaffar Khan Turbati who was encamped at Seor after suppressing the rebellions of Afghans of South Bihar. The chief also presented a *peshkash* of 30,000 rupees and 20 elephants.[28] We find no other reference about this chieftaincy in the sources of our period.

Garhi, was another chieftaincy of Bihar which lay on the border of the *suba* of Bihar and Bengal. This chieftaincy was conferred on Ram Bhim by Raja Man Singh during 1600-01, when Ram Bhim paid the valuable

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23 . *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, op.cit., p. 19.
24 . *Badshahnama*, Vol. I, part II, p. 317.
25 . H. Blochmann, "Notes on Chotia Nagpur, Panchet and Palamau" (1871, JASB), p. 118.
26 . *Badshahnama*, op.cit., p. 317.
27 . *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. II, p. 68.
28 . Arif Qandhari, *Tarikh-i-Akbari*, p. 226.

services to the Mughals in the Bengal expedition.[29] Udho Singh was the third chief of Garhi who was forced to present himself before Shahjahan in 1642 and was converted to Islam.[30] The chieftaincy of Garhi was reconferred and the title of '*Raja*' was granted to him by Shahjahan.[31] We did not find other accounts about this chieftaincy in the sources of our study.

Ratanpur was another important chieftaincy of North Bihar. In *Ain* Ratanpur is mentioned a *mahal* of *sarkar* Rohtas, with a strong fort.[32] Abdullah Khan Feroz Jang, the governor of Bihar invaded Ratanpur in 1636-37 and compelled the chieftain Babu Laxman to fight bravely against the Mughal army for some times. But he was defeated and was forced to accept the subordination of the Mughals. He paid a huge amount of money and elephants as *Peshkash* to the *subedar* of Bihar.[33] Thereafter we have no records about this chieftaincy also.

The **Chieftains of Ramnagar** trace their origin from Ratan Singh of Chittor. They established their chieftaincy in Ramnagar, 30 miles to the north-west of Betia in Champaran. One of the chiefs of Ramnagar was given the title of '*Raja*' by Aurangzeb in 1676.[34]

The **Chieftaincy of Bhagwanpur** (in *Mauza* Bhagwanpur) was founded by Raja Laxmi Mal. He was a Rajput who came to Bihar from Sakri

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29. K.K. Basu, "The History of Telliagarhi and Madhubani", *IHRC*, vol. 35, Pt. II, 1960, op.cit., pp. 51-55.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. II, pp. 68-69.
33. *Badshahnama* vol. I, Pt. II, p. 84, *Maasir ul Umara*, II, pp. 785-86.
34. O'Malley, op.cit. (Champaran), p. 159. Also see W.W. Hunter, op.cit., Vol. XIII, p. 252.

near Delhi and took Chayanpur and Chausa under his possession.[35] But we do not find the detailed accounts of this principality.

The **Deoraj family** of Gaya seems to be one of the oldest family of Bihar. It traced its origin from the family of Sisodia Rajput. This chieftaincy was founded during the Mughal period.[36] But we have no other information about this chieftaincy.

Kahalgaon (Colgong), a *mahal* in the sarkar of Munghyr[37] was a prominent chieftaincy during 16th century.[38] The Chai chieftaincy was the another principality which lay in the *Pargana* Chai of Munger. This chieftaincy was also founded during the 16th century. The Chai chieftaincy appears to be a branch of the chieftaincy of Kharakpur.[39] Its capital was at Alamnagar in Bhagalpur.[40]

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35 . L.N. Ghose, *The Modern History of the Indian Chiefs, Rajas and Zamindars* and C. Pt. II, Calcutta 188, p. 437.

36 . Ibid., p. 426.

37 . *Ain-i-Akbari*, V, p.

38 . Hunter, op.cit., vol. XIV, pp. 245-46.

39 . Hunter, op.cit., XIV, pp. 242-43.

40 . Ibid., pp. 91-92.

Chapter – X

CONCLUSION

The present study is mainly based on a detailed biographical account of the chieftaincies (and their chieftains) of Kharakpur, the *Ujjainias* of Bhojpur, the *Cheros* of Palamau, the Gidhaur, the Kokhra, the Darbhanga Raj, the Hathwa Raj (Kalyanpur), the Betia Raj (Champaran), Panchet, and Seor presented in eight chapters of the thesis. The study shows that most of these chieftaincies were located in midst of dense forest and hilly tracts, not easily accessible to the Mughal forces. The *Ujjainia* chieftaincy, for example, was covered from all sides with dense forest. We are told that Raja Gajpati *Ujjainia* rebelled and took shelter in the fort of Jagdishpur during 1576-77 and 'The Mughal soldiers took two months in cutting down the trees around the dwelling'.[1] According to Abul Fazl Madho Singh (Madhukar Rai), the *Raja* of Kokhra, frequently rebelled because the 'hilly tracts, were difficult to cross'.[2]Jahangir in his memoirs too writes, 'Although the governors of the *suba* frequently sent armies against him (Kokhra) and went there themselves, in consequence of the difficult roads and thickness of the forest they contended themselves with taking two or three diamonds and left him in his former condition'.[3]

Palamau chieftaincy was also located around dense forests and rugged hills and a strong fort built atop the hill.[4] According to Lahori, rulers of

1 *Akbarnam III*, pp. 176-89.
2 Ibid.
3 *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, pp. 154-55.
4 *Alamgirnama*, pp. 648-60.

Palamau taking advantage of dense forest in their chieftaincy, which were almost inaccessible, showed no sign of obedience to the governor of the *suba* of Bihar.[5] Several other chieftaincies such as Kharakpur, Gdhaur, Hathwa Raj and Betia Raj were also surrounded by dense forests. Besides that all the chiefs have built strong forts, generally on hilltops. Arif Qandhari writes, "there are nearly two or three hundred *zamindars*. There suppression was very difficult, as they posess strong forts. If they are able to hold on to each one of the forts, say for six months or one year, they can be contended about their safety for the next two or three hundred years.[6]

We shall now examine the nature of submission of the chieftaincies to the Mughals or in other words, the nature of overlordship established by the Mughal over the chieftains.

Most of the important chiefs of Bihar such as Raja Gajpati *Ujjainia* , Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur, Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur, Madhukar Rai and Bairisal, the chiefs of Kokhra, Raja Udai Karan of Champaran accepted the overlordship of the Mughal imperial authority during the years 1568-80, when the campaign against the Afghans was in progress.[7] But it is quite surprising to note that even *Akbarnama* does not inform us that under what terms and condition the chiefs accepted the subordination of the Mughals. For example about Raja Gajpati who submitted before Munim Khan in 1569, Abul Fazl writes that he agreed to pay five-lakh *malguzari* annually. In 1578 the chief of Seor presented a *Peshkash* of 30,000 rupees and 20

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5 *Badshahnama, II*, pp. 248-49.

6 *Tarikh-i-Akbari*, p. 47.

7 For details see chapters on *Ujjania* Chieftancy, Kharakpur Raj, Gidhaur, the Khokhra and Champaran Chieftaincies.

elephants. Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur and Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur after accepting the over lordship of the Mughals in 1591 offered to pay *Peshkash* of elephants and other rarities of the area.[8] There is hardly any references of any concession being offered to them on behalf of the imperial government.

However we do find that after accepting the over lordship of the Mughal authority some of these *Rajas* along with their military contingents helped imperial armies in suppressing the Afghan rebels. But no one of them was either given a rank or an office in the Mughal administration. We also find a reference of marriage of Prince Danial with the daughter of Raja Dalpat *Ujjainia* during the reign of Akbar but even after the marriage the Raja was neither given a rank nor any office in the administration.[9] We find another reference of marriage between the sister of Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur and Chandrabhan, the brother of Raja Man Singh.[10] But after this marriage also the Raja of Gidhaur did not get any special favour from the Mughal administration. It may also be pointed out that later on neither Akbar nor after him any other Mughal ruler entered in to matrimonial alliance with the chiefs of Bihar.

From the above one may conclude that Akbar was not favourably inclined towards the chiefs of Bihar and due to that neither the chiefs were given any concessions by the administration nor close cordial relationship could be established. But the policy followed by the Mughal administration in

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8 *Aakbarnama* III, p. 576.
9 Ibid. p. 826.
10 Ibid. pp. 460-61.

Bihar was quite different to the one adopted in relation to the chiefs of Rajasthan where almost every chief who accepted the subordination was given special favours. It seems that the Bihar chiefs were not considered of sufficient status for the establishment of matrimonial relations or even for grant of *mansab*. It also seems that politically too they were not considered of much importance even in Bihar because many of them did not have large following of their clan or kinsmen as they had immigrated from different regions of Hindustan and established there *zamindari* in Bihar after dispossessing either some local chief or an aboriginal tribe. For example the *Ujjainias* of Bhojpur were Parmar Rajputs and have migrated from *Ujjain* and established their hegemony over Bhojpur after expelling *Cheros*, a Dravidian tribe of that region.[11]Likewise the founding fathers of the Kokhra chieftaincy, originally belonged to Kawardha region in Madhya Pradesh, but after being overthrown by the Gonds during the fourteenth century, they migrated to Chotanagapur region and carved out an independent kingdom.[12] The family of Gidhaur chieftaincy belonged to Mahoba in Bundelkhand but a few generations later, Bir Bikram Shah, established his chieftaincy at Gidhaur, after killing the chief of Dosadhs, the local inhabitants, in 1262.[13] The entire areas of the Kharakpur chieftaincy was originally held by an aboriginal tribes called Khetauris and they were about 52 tribal chiefs. Sometime in the beginning of the 16th century, three Rajput brothers named Dandu Rai, Basdeo Rai and Mahender Rai took service under Raja Sasanka, the Khetauri chief of Kherhi near Munger. In due course of time, the brothers defeated all

11 R N Prasad, *History of Bhojpur*, p 7-17

12 *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, Vol. II, Pt.I, p. 287.

13 O'Malley, op cit, pp 209-210

the 52-khetauri chiefs and established the Kharakpur chieftaincy.[14] The chiefs were also not given much importance by Akbar probably because most of them held very small area under their control and strategically too the areas held by the chiefs were not of importance for the Empire.

Besides that there close relation with the Afghans also came in their way because Mughal authorities could not fully rely on them. As a consequence as soon as the imperial armies withdrew from Bihar after suppressing Afghans the Rajas one after the other openly rebelled and refused to pay tribute. Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur, Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur, Raja Gajpati *Ujjainia* and Raja of Khokhra rebelled on several occasions during Akbar's reign.

The chieftains however improved their position at the Mughal court during the reign of Jahangir. For the first time some of them were granted *mansabs*. Raja Roz Afzun assigned the rank of 1500/700 during the reign of Jahangir.[15]He remained at the court for sometimes and became a great favourite of the Emperor. He was sent to enquire as to why Khurram defied imperial orders and captured the *jagir* of Dholpur, which had already been assigned to Shahriyar.[16] Again Raja Roz Afzun was sent to summon Prince Parvez to the court to lead a campaign against the rebel Prince Khurram.[17] Raja Roz Afzun was promoted to the rank of 2000 *zat* and 1000 *sawar* during Shahjahan's reign.[18] This was the highest *mansab* so far given to any chief of

14 L.S.S.O. Malley, op. cit. p. 214, Also see Hunter, op. cit., p. 177.
15 *Maasir-ul-Umara*II, p. 218.
16 *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 346.
17 Ibid., p. 354.
18 *Badshahnama*, vol. 1, Pt. 1, p. 303

Bihar. He was asked not only to help the Mughal authority in and around Bihar but also was deputed to serve the imperial army in Kabul, Balkh and Deccan.[19]

Raja Narayan Mal Ujjainia was also granted *mansab* of 1000 *zat* and 800 *sawar* during the reign of Jahangir.[20] His son Raja Pratap *Ujjainia* held *mansab* of 1500 *zat* and 1000 *sawar* in the first year of Shahjahan's reign.[21] He also granted him *jagir* in *sarkar* Shahabad. Another *Ujjainia* chief Raja Rudra Singh was able to win the confidence of emperor Aurangzeb and was appointed the *faujdar* of *sarkar* Shahabad for sometimes during 1682.[22] Pratap *Chero* (1000/1000), Raj Bir Narayan of Panchet (700/300) Amar Singh of Bhojpur (1000/800) were also given ranks in the time of Shahjahan. During the reign of Aurangzeb no further promotions were given to any of the chiefs.

During the war of succession among the sons of Shahjahan, all the four sons approached several chiefs of Bihar and sought their help. Princes Shah Shuja and Dara Shikoh, both appealed to Raja Dal Singh of Gidhaur to help them with his arm retainers.[23] Dara Shikoh persuaded Dal Singh to capture Kharakpur as its chief Raja Bahroz had declined to help him and preferred to support Prince Shah Shuja.[24] Dara Shikoh also rewarded Koklat *Ujjainia* (Gokul Chand *Ujjainias,* a rival of Amar Singh, the chief of Bhojpur), by promoting him to the rank of 1000 *zat* and 800 *sawar* for his help in the war

19 *Badshahnama*, vol. 1, Pt. 1, pp. 213-18, 537.

20 *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia*, II, p.34.

21 *Badshahnama,* Vol. I, Pt. I, 221, *Amal-i-Saleh*, p. 462.

22 *Akhbarat* dated 16th August, 1682, Jaipur, S/L No. 2125(1-2) p. 549.

23 *Farman* quoted in B.P. Ambashthaya, "Some farmans, sanads, Nishans and Inscriptions in Bihar", *JBRS*, Vol. XLIII, Sept.-Dec., 1957, Parts II, pp. 221-22.

24 Ibid.

against his brother.[25] Raja Bahroz of Kharakpur helped prince Shah Shuja till the battle of Samugarh (29 May, 1658). Thereafter he went over to Aurangzeb and helped him against Shah Shuja.[26] Other chiefs also sided with one or the other prince in the succession war. However after the accession of Aurangzeb also the position of the chiefs of Bihar could not improve.

The relation between the chiefs and the Mughal administration were generally not very cordial. During the reign of Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb also several chiefs rebelled and the imperial administration took very strong action after suppressing their rebellions. Raja Pratap *Ujjainia* rebelled against the Mughals in 1637. He was arrested and executed in Patna and his chieftaincy (Bhojpur) was brought under *Khalsa* and Nemat Khan, son of Sayid Khan was deputed to look after the affairs of Bhojpur. However after a lapse of nearly twelve years, his son Amar Singh with the help of Prince Shah Shuja, was able to get back his chieftaincy. The case of Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur in this connection is quite unique and merits our attention. In 1606 he rebelled and in the battle fought with the imperial army posted in Bihar he was killed. It appears that after his death his state was brought under *Khalsa* and was restored to his son Toral Mal (named Roz Afzun after conversion) after some time on the condition of his embracing Islam. In the reign of Shahjahan also Raja Udho Singh of Garhi was recognized as the legal successor only on the condition of his conversion to Islam.[27] We don't have much information about Raja Udho Singh but Raja Roz Afzun and his successor Raja Bahroz enjoyed important position after

25 B.P. Ambashthya, Some letters from Jaipur Records (Hindi), *IHRC*, Vol. 35, 1960.

26 *Alamgirnama*, pp. 494-95, *Waqiat-i-Alamgiri*, p. 125.

27 K.K. Basu, "The History of Teliagarhi and Madhubani", op. cit. pp. 51-55.

conversion to Islam. Some of them such as *Ujjainias* of Bhojpur. Kharakpur, Palamau and Panchet were absorbed in the Mughal administration and were given *mansabs* But the Rajas of Gidhaur, Champaran, Kalyanpur, Kokhra, Seor etc were not given any *mansab* although they rendered military services as and when the Mughal administration required.

The chieftains were required to pay tribute (*Peshkash*) as a mark of submission. However the information in this regard is so little that it is difficult to determine the exact amount of *Peshkash* paid by the chiefs of Bihar. It is also not clear whether it was yearly or half yearly. *Peshkash* was generally presented at the time of submission or whenever the emperor, princes or their representative (high *mansabdars* or commander etc.) passed through their territories. It was paid either in cash or kind. When in kind, it consisted of valuable commodities or the rarities of the region. In Bihar besides cash, elephants were the main items to be presented as *Peshkash.* The region of Kokhra being rich in diamonds its Raja invariably included diamonds in his *Peshkash.* In certain chieftaincies the administration arbitrarily fixed *Peshkash* at a very high rate and as the chieftains failed to pay the amount the states were invaded by the imperial armies and forced to pay the amount. If they failed, the chieftaincies were brought under *Khalsa.*[28]

In view of ensuring the fidelity of the chiefs, whether *mansabdars* or *non mansabdars,* they were required to send their sons or kinsmen as hostages to the court. Hari Singh, son of Puran Mal of Gidhaur, was kept as a hostage at Delhi for the good conduct of Puran Mal.[29]

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28 For more details see chapter on *Cheros* of Palamau.

29 For more details see Chapter on Gidhaur Chieftancy. During War of Suscession Prabal Singh, the son of Amar Singh *Ujjainia* was kept as an hostage by Prince Sha Shuja for the safe conduct of Amar Singh (*T.U.*,II, p. 70).

We also find that the Mughal emperors extended help and protection to the loyal chiefs in case of the civil war in their territories or against any outside aggression. During 1607-08 Emperor Jahangir ordered. Rai Kalyan Singh to immediately proceed towards Bhojpur to help Narayan Mal to suppress the rebellion of the *Cheros* in his territory.[30] During 1599-1600, Barkhurdar son of Abdur Rahman was imprisoned for his attempt to kill Dalpat *Ujjainia* who had submitted to Prince Daniyal.[31]

We also find that some of the chieftains were hostile to each other. Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur and Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur, the two neighbouring chiefs on accounts of some family feud were bitter enemies. During 1607-11, we find a bitter struggle between Raja Naryana Mal *Ujjainia* of Bhojpur and some of the *Cheros* chief of Shahabad region.[32] With the help of the Mughals, Raja Narayan Mal defeated the *Cheros*. In another case of disputes, Medini Rai, the *Chero* chief attacked over Kokhra chieftaincy and defeated Raja Durjan Sal and ransacked his capital.[33] During 1719, we again find the tussle between the two chieftaincies in which *Cheros*, forcibly occupied Tori, territory of Kokhra.[34] There were also hostilities between Betia chieftaincy and Darbhanga Raj.

Similarly family feud was a general phenomenon among the chieftains of Bihar *suba*.

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30 *T.U.*II
31 *Akbarnama* III, p. 758.
32 *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainia* II, pp. 28-33.
33 The Comprehensive History of Bihar, p. 269.
34 Ibid., p. 282.

In our study of the chiefs, the Darbhanga Raj (Chapter seven) provides us some very interesting facts. We find that the founder of this chieftaincy Mahesh Thakur was made the *Chaudhari* and *Qanungo* of *sarkar* Tirhut in *suba* Bihar by a *farman* of emperor Akbar.[35] In the course of time, Jahangir and Shahjahan granted to the chiefs (of Darbhanga Raj) the *Chaudharai* and *Qanungoi* of some additional *parganas*. Thereafter in 1665 Aurangzeb by a *farman* conferred on Mahinath Thakur *sadr zamindari* of *sarkar* Munger, Purnia and Tajpur in addition to *sarkar* Tirhut.[36] By the same *farman* these grants were also made hereditary. He was also favoured with a *khilat* and *Mahi Maratib* which were usually conferred upon *Rajas*.[37] Consequently, the *Rajas* of Darbhanga Raj acquired the status of a hereditary chieftain.

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35. The *farman* is quoted by Qeyamuddin Ahmad in his article "Origin and Growth of Darbhanga Raj (1574-1666)" *IHRC*, vol. 31, 1961, pp. 89-90.

36. It is mentioned in "Origin and Growth of Darbhanga Raj (1574-1666)", op.cit., pp. 94-95.

37. Ibid.

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